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The Answer Is . . .
YOUR NERVES

The Answer Is . . .

YOUR NERVES

BY

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THE WORLD'S WORK LTD (1931)
KINGSWOOD SURREY

To
THE FAMILY PHYSICIAN

FIRST PUBLISHED 1947

—
THIS BOOK IS PRODUCED IN COMPLETE
CONFORMITY WITH THE AUTHORISED
ECONOMY STANDARDS

—
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PREFACE

FOR many years I have felt the need of a simple little book which might explain to my patients the numerous complaints typical of most nervous persons; a book which would help them to realise that their condition is far from hopeless. Certain cases require mental therapy which can be supplied only by those who specialise in nervous disease, and for these this book is not intended. Instead it is offered simply as a mental pick-up to that great number of people who at some time or other in their lives experience a "case of nerves".

It is hoped that this book may be of help to my medical and surgical colleagues in the care of their nervous cases. There are not sufficient minutes a day in the life of a busy doctor to explain in detail the various reasons for nervous disorders. This book is offered to the medical profession with the hope that it may assist the overworked doctor in solving some of the numerous problems of the nervous patient. It has become increasingly difficult for me to find time adequately to answer the questions and find a way out for such persons. Just to tell a patient he is not suffering from organic disease or that he does not need an operation or medicine, is not enough.

ARNOLD S. JACKSON.

MADISON, WISCONSIN.

CHAPTER I

RELAX THOSE NERVES

TODAY, more people than ever before are suffering from that prevalent world-wide disease—"NERVES".

The effects of war are being felt by all and will continue to harass the people of this earth for many years. First, it was the accelerated pace set by modern industry and the ever-increasing demands on our energy, then the worry and great sorrow that has touched nearly every home and has, in a great many cases, unbalanced our nervous systems.

Re-education. Rehabilitation. People everywhere are talking about the great problem involved in erasing the ravages of war. There is an urgent need to do just that for ourselves, for if we are to be strong for the job ahead we will have to draw on the resources of a sound mind and healthy body and a balanced nervous system.

Now the task that lies ahead is not simple, nor can it be accomplished in a short time. To rebuild and rebuild well, will require the removal of the debris of old fears and bad living habits.

If we would regain our poise and serenity, we must build from within, that is: we must first of all wish to repossess our health and happiness; then we must have faith—faith in our own power, for every sane person is born with the power to master his own mind. And here in the mind must begin the readjustment, the mastery of self.

A philosophy of life! There is the key. If we could develop an attitude of calm, self-assurance and break down the fears and doubts that weaken us, we would be more able to meet the adversities of life. A perfect philosophy of life would serve as a guide in every crisis; but few people ever attain that high goal. However, if one were continually to work towards a superior behaviour pattern, he would develop an attitude which should help free him from the frustrations and repressions that use up so much of his energy and make him an easy prey to nervous tension.

Doctors cannot hand out a ready-made philosophy, but they can help to start the patient on the road to recovery. If the physician has examined the patient and found no organic disease, the solution obviously rests with the patient, who then becomes his own best doctor. In some cases the help of a psychiatrist may be necessary, but the co-operation of the patient and a sincere desire to attain a well-organised mind are necessary to dissolve the obscure and complex tensions. Once the sufferer of "nerves" has found his bearings, has learned enough about himself to regulate his daily work, sports, sleep, diet, love life and the rest of this complicated business of living, he will be able to take the bumps along the way without too much shock to the nervous system.

The better the philosophy of life, the more perfect the balance. The person who possesses a well-rounded, consistent philosophy is far more powerful and capable of greater achievements than is the person who does not have clear self-understanding and discipline which help him to transcend the obstacles that everyone meets along his path of life.

But, the seeker of health must also try to overcome

the influence and effects of the outside factors which may be contributing to his emotional disturbance and nerviness. Certain physical factors and associations may weaken his body and be a source of friction to the nervous and mental well-being.

Tension and Relaxation

Rest and relaxation! One often wonders if the people who dwell in large cities ever really appreciate the meaning of those words. Certainly one of the greatest contributing factors to increased nervous tension is the pace set by our large cities in their constant demand for more speed and their failure to check unnecessary noise. The result is city fever.

Whether or not the human brain can adjust itself properly to the tremendous change in our system of living in the present century, time alone can tell. It has reached the point now where nervous disorders assume far greater significance than the great plagues of history.

The depression, the period known as the "terrible thirties" and then World War Two have required a profound readjustment in our way of life and have placed a heavy toll on the brain and nervous system.

The nervous patient frequently requires more attention than one suffering from organic disease. Doctors speak of diseases as being either organic or functional. A disease is organic if it affects one or more organs of the body. Stomach ulcer is an organic disease, because there is a definite lesion of the stomach. Indigestion caused by stomach ulcer would be an organic disease. But sometimes indigestion is a functional disease. It is functional if there is nothing wrong with the stomach

itself, yet the patient has all the pain and discomfort of indigestion. In functional disease a few words may restore a patient's confidence and alleviate his complaint. Then again it may require hours or even days to unravel his troubles and relieve his mind and body. The busy doctor is seldom in a position to discuss in detail his patients complaints once he is satisfied the trouble is functional and not organic. A doctor of the old school may resort to medicines and common sense. Lacking the knowledge and experience of the older generation, a young doctor may explain to a patient that his trouble is due merely to nerves and advise him to forget it. Oft-times such treatment does not suffice; the patient, still in doubt as to his condition, is likely to become the victim of a quack.

Since today two out of every three patients who consult the average physician or surgeon suffer from some nervous disorder, there are obviously many who never reach the psychiatrists and neurologists. It is essential, therefore, that all doctors be prepared to advise and treat the nervous patient. Merely to tell people that there is nothing wrong with them is insufficient. To support their beliefs about their illnesses by suggestion, needless medication, or questionable surgery is a step in the wrong direction. A clear explanation of the cause of their trouble, the eradication of this cause, and sound advice and assurance as to the future may eliminate the source of the nervous condition.

One of the most frequent causes of nervous trouble is the tension produced by city life. Physicians agree that one important way to overcome this tension of city life is to learn to relax. Two very different methods of relaxing have recently been suggested. One by

Jacobson advocates a systematic relaxation of all the muscles of the body in order to quiet the nervous system. Tensions and muscular contraction are to be overcome and complete muscular and mental relaxation produced by a series of exercises, not the kind of exercises you take to streamline your figure, but training designed to help you get the entire body in a state of complete physical relaxation.

*Jacobson's Method**

Jacobson says: "Every individual at least in some measure relaxes his muscles when he goes to rest. It would seem strange, therefore, if this natural function could not be specially cultivated to counteract an excess of activity and bring quiet to the nervous system."

He feels that even after a person thinks he is thoroughly relaxed there is a fine, continued contraction of muscle along with slight movements or reflexes. Jacobson terms this Residual Tension. Doing away with this Residual Tension is the essential feature of his method of relaxation. This is accomplished by the doctor's teaching the patient to "let go", muscle by muscle. All the first exercises are given lying down. An hour or more a day for four days is spent learning to relax the right arm. Four or more days are then spent learning to relax the left arm; six days for each leg; three for the trunk; and two or more for the neck. At least one day is spent practising relaxation of each, the forehead, brow, lips, eyelids, and cheeks; with from several days to a week or more for the eyes, for visual imagery; the jaws, the speech and the imagined speech.

*Edmund Jacobson, M.D., *You Must Relax*, (McGraw Hill)

As one old general practitioner used to prescribe relaxation:

"You lie down on your bed and let yourself go until you sink down through the mattress, down, down through the bed, down, down, down through the floor, down, down, down, down as far as you can go."

Letting go. That seems to be the secret. When this is completely learned it should be followed, according to Jacobson, by learning to relax while in a sitting posture, then how to perform various actions such as dancing, singing, playing golf or tennis with an absence of excess tension which he terms "differential relaxation".

"This term," says Jacobson in his book, *You Must Relax*, "means a minimum of tension in the muscles requisite for an act along with the relaxation of other muscles."

Certainly, much is to be gained by proper application of the art of muscular relaxation. One has only to note the furrowed brows of the business executive, the tensely-clasped hands of the nervous woman, or the strained expression of the city dweller to appreciate this. Everyone who is subjected to nervous tension, regardless of his occupation, should take certain periods for absolute muscular relaxation during the day. If he does fine work requiring the use of the eyes, he should relax the eye muscles by looking at distant objects. A doctor may relax best, perhaps, by a good yawn and a stretch. A stenographer should leave her typewriter to clear up the office or go on an errand. A school teacher should have fifteen minutes to herself morning and afternoon. Whatever your occupation, change your set duties several times a day, and practise complete relaxation of

all the muscles of your body. Go limp, close your eyes and think of something pleasant and cheerful.

Too Many Jobs

The other way of relaxing is a matter of re-educating oneself in a new philosophy of life which must include the art of playing, loafing and putting pleasure before business. Why be secretary of your luncheon club if you do not want to be and why be a slave to society? Say to yourself with no pang of conscience: "I'm fed up with dinner-parties. I'm going to refuse every invitation for a month and spend the evening in pyjamas." You may feel quite differently; you may feel that you have stayed at home every night for a week and dinner away from home is just what you need. If so, plan a party for yourself.

Maybe you are nervy because you are not only working under high tension all day, but are being continually subjected to irritating interruptions. Perhaps it is important that you interview many people, but if you are to continue to do your best work, it is equally important that at certain times of the day you relax, completely shut off from all irritating stimuli.

How can you do this? Some men are fortunate enough to have an inner and outer office. To overcome constant interruptions a friend of mine with only one office had placed outside it two small electrically-lighted glass boxes; one inscribed BUSY and the other COME. These are controlled by a switch at his desk, so that if necessary he can shut himself off from the outside world and relax for a few minutes. Of course, this would not shut one off completely from that greatest annoy-

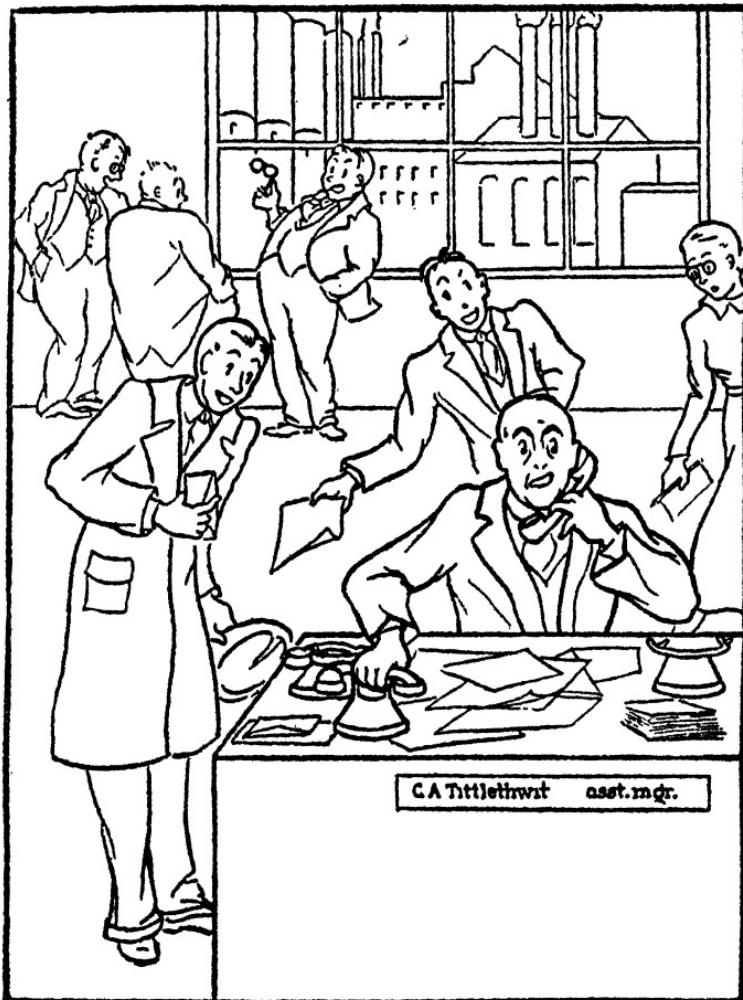
ance but also greatest convenience, the telephone. If one has a capable secretary, this vexation can be greatly lessened by having her take all the calls and ask you to answer only when necessary. Or if you are relaxation-minded you can make even the telephone an instrument of relaxation. For example, when waiting for long distance calls, you can be either tense and strained, or absolutely relaxed by taking these few minutes to forget about the problems of the day. Some men shout and work themselves up to high tension when talking over the telephone. Increasing nervous tension might be a factor in causing high blood-pressure.

Temper Your Tensions

Have you ever noticed how some men act in a barber's shop? They hurry in, want to know how long they must wait, pace up and down, pick up the paper and throw it down again. In other words, they spend fifteen minutes burning up nervous energy when they could just as well sit back in a comfortable chair and take forty winks.

Read the following sentence and try to guess who said them.

This is an age of speed, but a hurry-up age doesn't require us to be hurry-up people! I've seen motor-car drivers who insist upon BEING the car—on a long hill they lean forward, jaws set, muscles strained, and work hard. They think they're speeding things up; but we can speed up things only with skill, and skill is acquired slowly and patiently. Racing motor-cars and aeroplanes aren't driven by tense, hurried men, but by calm and skil-



"Some men shout and work themselves up to high tension when talking over the telephone."

ful ones. Fast thinkers grow from painstaking students and careful observers.

Looking at life from a bowler's stance, I don't think we have to break our necks to keep up. If I should let the yells of the grand stand panic me into hasty action, I'd get tense and bowl wildly. There's a great difference between handling a ball and being one. Cricket is often a fast game, but you've got to slow down to play it. And life is that way, too, I think.

If you have the hurry-up, busy-busy habit, try to break yourself of it. It is the curse of the modern world. Eliminate the unimportant tasks in your day; don't keep geared to high speed all the time; take your feet off the gas and apply the brakes occasionally.

The following cases show ways in which people are afflicted with city fever.

CASE 73110: Male; fifty-three years old; occupation: business executive. Three telephones were ringing almost constantly in his office. There were also several stenographers clicking their machines. There were constant demands and interruptions from his associates, customers and salesmen. He attended numerous conferences and directors' meetings. Civic duties demanded a share of his time; meal hours were given over to a study of the stock report or to business conferences.

He completed his nerve-racking day by a long drive through congested traffic to his suburban home. Here he hurried into evening clothes and plunged into a social whirl which deprived him of his much-needed evening of quiet relaxation.

After ten years of this life he was in a state of high nervous tension. He had been repeatedly advised by

physicians who examined him for life insurance better to regulate his life on account of a steady increase in his high blood-pressure. He made some half-hearted attempts to do this by playing an occasional game of golf. This afforded little relaxation, since the foursome in which he played was composed of skilful players and he was always handicapped and under strain.

Finally the terrific pace at which he was travelling caught up with him. He found it more and more difficult to get a good night's sleep. Without sleep he could not keep up with the demands of his business. Terrific headaches sent him to an eye specialist, but even the use of glasses afforded little relief. He consulted his physician, who again advised him that unless a complete change was made in his daily routine serious damage to his heart might occur as a result of the increasing blood pressure. He was told to give up all non-essential activities such as directorships in numerous companies and to resign from various offices in social organisations, to play leisurely games of golf, to leave his office at 4.30 daily and walk in the park for an hour before eating a meal devoid of heavy rich food such as he had been accustomed to eat. He was urged to reduce his weight from an excess of 190 pounds to a trim 175. Longer and more frequent vacations in the country were recommended.

After six months under the new regime this business executive presented an entirely different appearance. He had lost his haggard, anxious look. The deep circles had disappeared from beneath his eyes. His complexion had a healthy colour. There was a clear sparkle in his eye and he no longer complained of insomnia and fatigue. His blood pressure had dropped twenty points and in

every way he was much improved. He had bought a farm and spent long hours each week-end tramping over his property or doing physical work putting in improvements.

CASE 53016: Male; works in factory; is expected to turn out many hundred duplicate pieces of work each day. Receives high wages with double pay for overtime.

In an effort to provide luxuries for his family he put in more and more hours at his job; in spite of his overtime work his health had been excellent until his wife had the misfortune to fall on a slippery pavement and break her leg. This required extra hours of work at home and the double strain finally overtaxed his nervous system. He began to worry. He worried about his health. He worried about the possibility of keeping his job. This increased nervous tension brought on chronic constipation and seeking relief for this, he soon became an addict of various patent medicines. Some of these contained strong laxatives. These strong laxatives caused the development of haemorrhoids. This in time, deprived him of his sleep and rest. His work at the factory became less and less satisfactory. On account of his many years of faithful service, however, he was not discharged, but was finally called to the superintendent's office and given a chance to explain his trouble. The superintendent at once sent him to his physician for a complete physical examination.

This examination disclosed nothing of a serious organic nature and the physician reported to the superintendent that a few simple measures would soon restore the worker's health and efficiency. A proper diet including prunes and a glass of orange-juice for breakfast, plus two

raw vegetables and two cooked green vegetables each day to combat the constipation took the place of the patent medicines. Arrangements were made for a practical nurse for the home. The man was given two weeks' vacation, part of which was to be spent fishing.

The fishing was good and his troubles disappeared almost over night. At the end of two week's vacation he was fit and ready for work, and the company regained the services of a valuable employee.

Women Have It Too

Many women in the city, because of a lack of some special interest in their homes, devote all their time and effort to clubs and civic work and social engagements. Usually these women have no children, no hobbies and their husbands' lives are largely devoted to making money. When the husbands are at home, life is usually a round of parties, irregular hours, going to bed late, and expecting the beauty specialist to erase the visible effects of high living.

The hours from 10 to 12 a.m. are devoted to board meetings, after which a luncheon of rich salad and pastry, weight producing, is consumed between numerous cigarettes and cups of strong black coffee. Afternoons are usually given over to bridge, teas and cocktail-parties. Frequently there are fatiguing shopping expeditions and sometimes matinees and movies.

CASE 86431: Wife of a prominent attorney, president of the Woman's Club, Secretary of the League of Women Voters, ardent worker for the Community Charities, member of two bridge clubs, also a prominent hostess and drives her own car.

She was taken suddenly ill late one evening following a large dinner-party at her house. Her complaint was that her head seemed to be whirling in circles, that there were black specks before her eyes, that there were sharp shooting pains at the back of her neck, that her hands felt numb and cold. She seemed to be bloated. Her heart would pound and then seem to skip a beat and she was quite sure that she was going to die.

Examination of the heart at once revealed a perfectly normal organ with exception of an occasional extra heart-beat of no clinical importance. Although the entire abdomen was sensitive, there was no localised area of disease. The tongue was heavily coated and the eyes appeared dull and languid. The breath was foetid and alcoholic. There was evidence of marked obesity and the blood pressure was 170 about 30 points higher than normal. Examination of the eye grounds showed evidence of a beginning of hardening of the arteries. Urinalysis showed a trace of albumin. Diagnosis, city fever.

Thousands of women are leading lives such as this, too many late hours, too little exercise, too few hobbies. They should limit their civic activities to one or two organisations. They should restrict their eating to lighter, simpler foods and keep their weight within normal limits. Their make-up would be more becoming if they better regulated their hours of sleep and their use of stimulants. They would find more interest in their homes if they had either children of their own or adopted ones. They would have better hearts, lower blood pressure and healthier bodies if they enjoyed some form of outdoor exercise such as gardening or bicycling. Likewise they would have fewer functional complaints such

as pain in the back of the neck, twitching of the muscles, bloating and indigestion, and they would look slimmer and smarter.

CASE 67689: A young married woman, an office worker, recently consulted me. She was sent by her lawyer to prove that as the result of a motor accident she had developed an exophthalmic (toxic) goitre.

Here was a case of a country girl being transferred to the busy life of the city. She had been brought up to the song of the dove and the crowing of roosters and not to the roaring sound of the motor buses and the din of city traffic. The mad dash from her little one-room apartment to the office in the city, there to be plunged into the monotonous daily routine of huge piles of correspondence, reports, and filing had finally taken its toll of her nervous energy. Little opportunity was afforded for relaxation, because when she returned home at the end of the day there was the usual pile of breakfast dishes and other household tasks to look after.

Her relaxation consisted in running down to the café at odd moments for a cup of black coffee and a cigarette. In this way she was able to whip up her nerves and keep working. When she could not leave her desk the chemist would send up a "pick-me-up". No matter how tired she became during the afternoon she was always able to pep herself up by these methods and complete her work. That is, nearly always. Occasionally, when the boss put over a big deal it was necessary for her to carry some of her work home and complete the task late at night. She had had no vacation for two years.

Unfortunately, this girl failed to see the folly of her life until her nerves were so tense that she developed

frequent choking spells. She began to lose weight, which gave her eyes a more prominent appearance. She developed a tremor of the fingers as a result of all the stimulants she was taking. When someone suggested the possibility of cardiac development she became worried about her heart. Because the caffeine which she consumed in her coffee and "colas" now amounted to three medicinal doses a day she suffered from nervous indigestion, heart burn and palpitation.

Finally, following a slight motor accident in city traffic one Sunday afternoon, her entire nervous system seemed to collapse. A lawyer was consulted and he urged that a suit be started against the insurance company to recover damages because she had developed heart disease as the result of the accident. Physical examination at once revealed that there was no indication of this condition. On the contrary she was found to be suffering from extreme nervous fatigue and exhaustion.

The lawyer was advised that no damages could be recovered on these grounds. The girl was told to resign her position immediately, return to her parent's home on the farm for at least three months and to abstain from all stimulants. She was given no medicine with the exception of a mild sedative temporarily to relax her nervous system.

Within four weeks this girl had gained eighteen pounds. She was getting eight hours of normal sleep. She had replaced her artificial stimulants with milk, sunshine, fresh fruits and vegetables. She had lost her tense, strained facial expression and a ruddy glow had returned to her cheeks. She had a depth of vitality which gave her poise and she said that she was happier than she had been for two years.

CHAPTER II

MIRACLES, MALINGERERS, MOLLYCODDLES

An apparent Miracle

MOST of the patients I examined during my first three weeks at the clinic were troubled with nervous disorders. I had begun to think I had seen all the extreme forms which this baffling condition may take, when a very attractive young woman was brought to the Clinic by ambulance. The girl had become paralysed following a serious illness two years before. Her parents said that it had been necessary to bring her all the way from the Pacific on a stretcher. The details of her sickness were not entirely clear, but as I now recall, she had become ill following an unfortunate love affair. She had grown despondent, had lost weight, and had gradually grown weaker and weaker. One day, without any apparent cause, her right leg became paralysed and a few days later the same condition developed in the left leg. The family physician was unable to explain the cause of this tragedy. Infantile paralysis was suspected and other physicians were called into consultation, but not one of them could make a diagnosis. Her parents decided to bring her to us.

Upon careful examination, it was impossible to find any evidence of nerve paralysis. My chief was called in. He carefully studied her history and reports, dwelling on various significant points as he came to them. Once he got up and taking a neurologist's hammer he tapped her knees, first one and then the other, bringing about

quick involuntary elevation of the feet. Then with a sharp pointed stick he lightly scratched the sole of her foot, and as he did so all the toes were drawn downward. At this he shook his head and tossed the stick back into the desk as if to indicate that the diagnosis was determined. Then he walked up to the girl and looking her directly in the eye, he said in a low, firm voice that allowed no dispute: "Get up and walk." A pregnant silence filled the room. One sensed that the father was angry, the mother, defensive for her daughter. Some emotion within the girl seemed to fade and something came to life. Slowly she reached out her hand towards the doctor. He helped her off the stretcher and incredible as it may seem, she walked across the room, out of the door, and across the street to the hotel. It was like a miracle.

In this case the girl was not paralysed but only imagined she was. There have been many similar cases, of course, but the fact that the girl was brought such a long distance on a stretcher while able to walk, the great effort and expense to her parents and the girl's sudden and complete recovery, all made a very dramatic picture. We read and hear from time to time of such seeming miracles performed by persons other than physicians. We read of people regaining their hearing, their eyesight, the use of legs, arms or voice. In almost every instance supernatural miracles are not performed. It is restored self-confidence which has effected the cure.

Mental Quirks

Many nervy persons crave sympathy and kindness. In some there is a definite attempt to feign illness; such is

the malingerer. In still others fear is responsible for the condition. I will illustrate with actual cases some of the mental quirks which have come to my attention.

One day a coal-miner from Montana who was unable to walk was brought to my office. At that time I was assistant to a famous neurological surgeon, and because this patient appeared to be paralysed from the waist down, he was admitted to this service. The man's story was as follows:

"I was working on a late shift August second. We were cleaning out an old shaft while preparing to sink a new one at a deeper level. I saw a shovel someone left behind and just as I reached down to pick it up, something hit me a blow on the back. I fell over in a heap and everything went black. When I came to, the men were coming down to get me. They picked me up, but when I attempted to stand, my legs gave way and I was unable to walk. Then I realised that a big piece of coal must have fallen and hit me in the back, paralysing me. They put me in the hospital and gave me everything in the way of treatment.

"I was there for several weeks, during which time various tests were tried on my nerves. They even put pins in my legs to see which nerves were dead. I couldn't feel a thing as there was no life. My lawyer said the company would have to pay me £2,000 or give me a pension for life, but the company wouldn't give up until every kind of treatment had been tried. A month ago they sent me to another hospital, but the treatment there didn't work either. They took many X-rays, too, and then advised me to come here."

Several hours were spent studying this man's condition and he was subjected to a thorough neurological examina-

tion. It was very important from a medico-legal angle that we determine the exact level of the paresthesias (loss or change or sensation), and so with the aid of heat and cold, dull and sharp instruments, I went to work. It was possible to apply extreme heat anywhere on the legs without response. One could also prick the skin deeply with a needle without the slightest reaction. As the level of the hips was reached, sensation gradually returned, so that at the height of the first lumbar vertebra, he winced from a needle prick. After checking and re-checking the findings several times with the patient's eyes open or closed, the same levels of sensation were always determined.

From examination, it appeared that the man had sustained an injury at the level of the third lumbar vertebra. He was sent to the X-ray section and then was subjected to further study by consultants in the neurological department. After several days' study, it seemed apparent that the man was definitely paralysed, although there were several discrepancies which we were unable to account for, and the next question was whether or not surgery might offer any hope of recovery.

About this time a very famous French surgeon, who had achieved a great reputation in World War I for his work in the restoration of paralysed arms and legs, came to see our clinic. A consultation was arranged for our patient and a long discussion of his case followed. The advisability of operating was discussed pro and con in the presence of the patient and the site of operation was carefully considered. Again the patient was subjected to a most careful examination. When touched lightly with a flick of cotton, there was absolutely no sensation until a certain level was reached. No matter how many

times the test was made, the same results were obtained. The response to needle-pricks was the same. He could feel absolutely nothing, whereas a normal person would have jumped out of bed from the same test. Still, from a neurological basis, there were certain variations in the sensory and motor changes which we were unable to explain. The two surgeons finally concluded that an exploratory operation might be advisable, but after leaving the room they requested more X-rays and a further study of the case.

He Was a Maligner

About an hour later, I received a hurry call from the nurse to come down to this man's room. When I reached his room, I found the bed empty, the window open and the patient gone. That patient has never been heard of since his strange disappearance. How he got out of town is still a mystery, but this was the answer to his case.

The man was a malingerer (one who pretends or protracts illness to escape duty). He had been subjected to so many examinations of the nerve sensations that he had them almost but not quite letter perfect. He had visions of an easy life. He had the alternative of either £2,000 or a life pension. The thought of undergoing an operation was something different. He had steeled his nerves to withstand the pain of needle pricks, but an operation and its possible serious consequences outweighed even the thought of riches.

Frequently this fear of operation will lead persons who need surgery to keep away from a reputable physician for fear he will operate. Recently a woman only forty years of age and the mother of a large family was brought

in by relatives. She had observed, six months previously, a small lump in her right breast. Instead of going to a doctor of medicine, she sought some charlatan, who gave her a magic plaster. Later, when surgery was expected to save her, operation revealed a very large cancerous growth which already involved the glands of the axilla to such an extent that her life expectancy cannot be more than a year. In this case fear of surgery meant the loss of six valuable months and the actual throwing away of a human life.

As a rule it is easy to detect a malingerer, but there are exceptions. Once a man came to be examined because his relatives were trying to have him taken to a hospital for the insane. The patient maintained that his peculiar way of earning a living was no indication of an unsound mind.

"For example?" I queried.

Instead of answering directly the man asked if there were any common pins in the office. When we handed him several, he took them one at a time, put them in his mouth, chewed them around a little and finally swallowed them. Not satisfied with amazing us that much, he reached over to the desk lamp, unscrewed the bulb, broke it on the edge of the desk and began to chew up the pieces. It was not just one or two small pieces of glass which he ate, but fully three-fourths of the bulb.

"I earn my living travelling with carnivals and fairs," he explained.

Then he showed us how he had learned to manipulate a pin with his teeth until the point was bent under and protected by the head of the pin before he swallowed it. He said that he chewed the glass until it was very finely ground, and that he took cathartics periodically to assist

in passing this foreign material. He solemnly added that he was careful of his diet.

Complete physical and neurological examination all indicated that he was not a malingerer but had a normal mentality. He was earning his living, although in an unusual way. It is surprising, even to a physician, to see how the human body can adjust itself to circumstances. Callouses form to protect hands or feet and disappear when the protection is no longer necessary. Bullets remain embedded for years without doing harm. Special muscles develop when special work is done over and over. A person can live comfortably minus a lung, a kidney or even part of the brain. And evidently this man had learned gradually to accustom his digestive tract to pins and ground glass. Whether it finally caused physical damage or not, I never learned.

Not all people object to operations. In fact, some nervous persons go from surgeon to surgeon seeking someone to operate upon them. I have had more than one patient not only disappointed, but even upset with me because operation was refused. A physician may spend hours of his time in a careful study of such a case; he will rule out every possible source of trouble, even requiring extensive laboratory examinations and X-ray studies in the desire to obtain a conclusive report. The final analysis of this exhaustive study, probably based on years of scientific effort on the part of his colleagues and himself, shows the patient to be free from all physical disease. The physician is happy that there is not a cancer, an abscess, a kidney stone, tuberculosis, or an incurable blood disease hidden away somewhere in the body and, in his enthusiasm, can hardly wait to give his patient the encouraging information.

"Well, Mrs. Smith, we have good news for you. All your reports are in and we can find no evidence of anything of a serious nature. Even the X-rays of your gastro-intestinal tract are negative."

She Enjoyed Poor Health

We look at Mrs. Smith to see her face light up with a smile at the wonderful news, because there had been a suggestion of a malignancy of the large bowel. She scarcely seems to hear our verdict. Instead of being forced to undergo a serious operation and a long hospital siege together with questionable recovery, her health is assured. But she is not happy over this good news. She has only this to say:

"It certainly is peculiar you can't find my trouble! I have heard your work well-spoken of, but it seems that you haven't been able to locate my difficulty. You don't think for one minute I imagine all the suffering I endure? You know, one physician at a well-known clinic tried to tell me that and I gave him a piece of my mind."

Is it any wonder that sometimes a physician, in desperation, resorts to the medicine cabinet to treat such people? They are positively unhappy to be told the truth. The thought of having to face the family with a clean bill of health after all the complaining they have done for years places them in a serious quandary. There must be some justification, some medicine, at least a pink or yellow pill to prove that something was wrong. Merely to be told to live like other people, refrain from inedication, eat good wholesome food, enjoy a normal amount of exercise and rest and sleep, does not suffice. Such persons court poor health. They drift from doctor

to doctor, hoping that someone will discover the source of their trouble. Their symptoms may mislead some doctor to believe their trouble is due to a diseased appendix. For a time after this is removed, they appear to be better, but since it is not the source of their trouble, they resume their complaints and are soon seeking new relief. Possibly they again deceive the doctor, or perhaps the latter belongs to the small unscrupulous group found in every profession who, in order to gratify a patient's whim, removes another organ or two. The procedure may be repeated over and over. Some neurasthenic persons undergo six or eight operations in their endeavour to find a cure-all. After each operation they feel better for a short time because there is a new sensation. When a reputable physician first sees them at this stage in their experience, he has, indeed, a difficult problem on his hands because irreparable damage may already have been done.

A Little Knowledge is Dangerous

Recently I received a letter from the husband of a patient of this type. He had at one time been a male nurse and he could use medical terms with apparent intelligence, and he thought he knew a great deal about diagnosis. He could not, however, differentiate between the complaints of his neurotic wife and the physical symptoms disclosed to a doctor by examination and laboratory tests. Although the wife had been operated upon five times before consulting us, she came with the idea of having her gall-bladder removed. My associates were unable to find any evidence of a diseased gall-bladder from the clinical examination and X-ray dye test.

There was, however, a scientific reason for her mental state. At one of her previous operations the ovaries had been removed. As a direct result of this operation she developed nervous symptoms. She had a pain here and another there; she could neither sleep nor eat; her heart beat was irregular, either too fast or too slow; her blood pressure was "too low", and she was very fidgety. Although the reasons for all this were explained to her husband, he was not convinced and asked to have made an X-ray of her stomach. This was done and reported negative by the roentgenologist. We advised that the wife receive ovarian therapy from her physician and that other measures be used to restore her mental health. Within a few weeks, however, the husband returned with his wife and requested a further study of her case, so she was admitted to the hospital to undergo again a careful examination. The same information concerning the wife was obtained from this second examination and we again assured them that no operation was necessary.

When the husband received our statement for services rendered, he wrote a letter mailed from an institution with a questionable reputation stating that X-rays taken there had not only disclosed a diseased gall-bladder but a fish-hook, low-lying type of stomach with many adhesions, etc. He then proceeded to admonish us for failing to locate his wife's trouble, adding that she would at last be cured of all her difficulty. In conclusion he stated that owing to his present heavy expense, he could not pay our bill. This was our reward for giving him an honest opinion concerning his wife and for trying to save her from one more needless operation.

Why do people seek operations unnecessarily? It is not an easy question to answer, but usually it is because

they wish to escape from some distressing condition. They feel abused; they crave sympathy; they enjoy attention; their nerves are shattered and having run the gamut of all other cures, they turn to surgery. Usually it is a flare back to a misdirected childhood. Once started on a course of needless surgery, nerve patients may never be satisfied until they have persuaded someone to separate them from most of their organs. In the end they are only worse because in such cases the basis of their trouble has been functional rather than organic. One cannot condemn needless surgery too strongly, and yet every physician and surgeon knows that just as every profession and business has its evils, surgery, which should be on a higher plane of honesty than all others, has not escaped.

The subject of neurasthenia or of frank neurosis is really beyond the scope of this book, and I have merely touched upon it, because I wanted to show why quacks and patent medicines are able to flourish. There are many who contend, among whom are physicians, that there is real cause for every case of neurasthenia. Some have attempted to explain it on a basis of Freudian theories, while others have merely insisted that there is trouble somewhere which cannot be located. That may be true, but I have seen the best physicians unable to offer for neurasthenia any plausible explanation based on an organic disease. There is no reason why a neurasthenic might not develop a cancer, tuberculosis, or a toxic goitre, but strangely, the combination is unusual. The neurasthenic is always insisting that he has from one to a dozen ailments, whereas a physician frequently finds it difficult to convince a patient suffering with cancer or tuberculosis that he is truly ill and in need of medical

attention. Every physician has had patients of the latter type who, even on their death-beds, maintained that they were going to recover. There is nothing more gratifying to a physician or surgeon than to wage a hard battle to save someone who appears doomed to die and then by some miracle see the patient recover. Such reward makes it a privilege to practice medicine.

The neurasthenic never seems doomed to die. He isn't that ill. Yet seldom does he improve much under a doctor's care. He is in reality his own best doctor and can do more to regain his health than any doctor can do for him.

CHAPTER III

TIGHT NECKS, CHOKING SENSATION, AND SHORTNESS OF BREATH

Some Common Symptoms

AN incredible number of persons complain of tight necks, choking sensations and shortness of breath. These complaints are common in middle age, rarely occurring in children or in elderly persons. They appear most frequently in women who are nervy and under tension. They are found in school-teachers, stenographers, bookkeepers, telephone and telegraph operators, clerks and students. Mothers under the strain of rearing large families and farm wives, who have laboured long hours for many years without rest or change, often complain of tightness in the neck or choking sensations. Even the young man or woman perplexed by problems of sex may fall a prey to these disturbances.

Strangely, men seldom complain of these conditions, but among women, they are, perhaps, the most prevalent nervous symptoms. This does not imply that women are less courageous than men, even though they tend to be more emotional. On the contrary, women have proved far braver surgical patients than men, and as a rule endure severe pain with greater fortitude.

Tight Necks

Many a woman, feeling a tightness or constriction in the neck, assumes she is suffering from goitre and, there-

fore, consults her physician. As a matter of fact, people with goitres seldom mention these sensations, even though their goitres are of considerable size, but they do frequently complain of shortness of breath, especially upon exertion. This feeling of tightness in the neck, then, appears to be only an indication of undue tension and nerves. It is rarely noticed at the beginning of the day, but in the late afternoon, it gradually increases until the person affected feels that something must be wrong.

The actual explanation of this annoyance is not known. In fact, as with fever blisters, acne, and various other common afflictions, the science of medicine has been too preoccupied with more serious problems to pay much attention to this minor ailment. I have attempted to offer an explanation to my patients with the following illustration: When one is still in his teens and does not know what it is to worry and be nervy, the numerous skin nerves of the neck seem to be relaxed like an unused rubber band. After reaching the twenties and encountering some of the more complex problems of life, these nerves appear to become tense like a rubber band which is stretched taut. Such a sensation is conveyed to the skin of the neck. An impression of tightness develops, just as it does if a rubber band is stretched across the throat. Sometimes, during examination, a rubber band is actually held against the neck, and patients on whom this test has been tried agree that the taut rubber band conveys a similar sensation.

Mere assurance that this feeling of constriction is not an indication of goitre is insufficient to relieve the patient's discomfort. The basis of the trouble which might be a stormy love affair, a complicated business problem, an unruly child, a troubled home life or any-

thing that leads to nervous tension must be determined and the patient taught how to relax. Frequently, a vacation, a change of occupation, rest periods, mild sedatives, and the omission of coffee or other stimulants will completely remedy the trouble. Sometimes choking sensations and tightness of the neck are complained of by women before, during, or after menopause, and attention to the above suggestions, together with suitable ovarian therapy administered by a physician will usually bring relief.

Shortness of Breath

Shortness of breath may be a symptom of organic disease, such as leakage of the heart, or intrathoracic goitre, but it may also result from purely functional causes as well. It is rather common in nervous people, especially women, and is frequently accompanied by hot flashes, dizzy spells, and nervousness. Younger women often complain of difficulty in getting their breath or of their inability to obtain a "satisfying breath". Some patients may also describe vague pains in the chest and region of the heart. This seeming difficulty in breathing is not caused by exertion, as in organic disease, for it usually occurs when the patient is resting. As sighing or yawning may accompany this type of shortness of breath, it seems probable that often this is a functional rather than an organic condition.

"Two types of abnormal breathing are seen," according to Drs. F. A. Willius and C. K. Maytum, "the sighing type and the panting type.* These differ chiefly in the rate of respiration and in the severity of the attack. The first type is by far the most common and, although

*From Mayo Clinic Bulletin.

distressing, is usually not severe. The latter type, however, may alarm not only the patient and his relatives but the attending physician as well.

"The sighing type of abnormal breathing consists of a series of deep sighing or yawning respirations, the rate of respiration usually being but slightly altered, whereas the depth is greatly increased. The sensation of weight, oppression, or constriction in the thorax seems to initiate the attack and, as a rule, complete temporary relief follows one or more deep breaths. Less often the attack may last several hours, the patient sighing or yawning at frequent intervals."

Sometimes these patients feel that they are actually choking and can obtain aid with great difficulty. As soon as they are able to relax, however, and gain their self-composure, they are able to breathe as well as anyone else.

It is a natural reaction for anyone to sigh or yawn, and the patient's attention is attracted to his breathing only by the frequency of sighing or by his failure to obtain relief from prolonged inspiratory effort. The patient's attention has, perhaps, been directed towards his heart by occasional spells of palpitation or vague chest pains. Palpitation is seldom of clinical importance, and chest pains of this type are often the result of neuritis from local infection. The combination of palpitation, dyspnea (difficult or laboured breathing) pain, and perhaps, the advice of someone to rest the heart, all combine to convince the patient he must have serious heart disease when in reality he has nothing to worry about.

Fatigue May Be a Factor

It seems that there is a sound physiologic basis on

which to explain the symptoms of sighing respiration among these patients. Haldane, the great English physiologist, has suggested that chronic, mild anoxemia* due to shallow breathing was an important causal factor in military neurasthenia (soldier's heart). When shallow breathing is prolonged, it results in fatigue of the respiratory centre in the brain which, if marked, produces a feeling that the person cannot expand his chest to breathe. It feels to him as if it were mechanically constricted.

Nervous shock or prolonged nervous strain and fatigue with its resultant increases in nervous and muscular tension cause an involuntary restriction of respiratory excursion so that less air than usual is taken into the lungs. Mild anoxemia follows because of the shallow breathing, and sighing and yawning respirations compensate temporarily for the slight oxygen deficiency brought on by the shallow respiration of fatigue or emotional disturbance.

On the other hand, "the panting type of functional respiratory disturbance," say Willius and Maytum, "occurs in attacks that are characterised by rapid, deep, and forceful breathing; these attacks last for a moment to an hour or more. The onset may be gradual or sudden."

The marked anxiety and fear of death which are present undoubtedly help to bring on an attack as well as to prolong it. Patients who complain of inability to get enough air often insist upon opening windows and doors. In spite of their difficulty in breathing, there is neither cyanosis (any bluish discolouration of the skin) nor stridor (a harsh, high-pitched sound like the whistling of the wind) nor any other evidence of obstruction.

*Deficiency in the oxygen content of the blood. Called also oxygen want.

It should be emphasised that there is no true shortness of breath.

They Bring It On Themselves

If this rapid and abnormal breathing is continued, hyperventilation results which may produce tetany (a condition in which the fingers and toes may be contracted; spasm of the muscles of the face, and even convulsions occur). Usually only milder symptoms, such as numbness and tingling of the hands and feet, result. As a further consequence of this hyperventilation, there is an excessive loss of carbon-dioxide and the reaction of the body changes definitely to the alkaline side. Furthermore, if these people persist in hyperventilating their lungs, they may disturb the oxygen and carbon dioxide balance of their bodies to such an extent as to produce an actual chemical change, resulting in numbness and tingling of the hands and feet, and even cramping and tetany. This condition is frequently seen in nervy women suffering from emotional attacks. Usually a few words of calm assurance by the physician will end the attack immediately, but if the patient can hold the attention of the worried relatives, the attacks will continue.

CASE 68423: Not long ago, I received a call to come quickly to the aid of a woman who was choking to death. A block from the house, relatives were waiting for me to rush in and save the patient before it was too late. Upon entering the sick-room, I found a middle-aged woman waving her arms, beating the bed, and clutching at her neck, as though she were suffocating. She gasped that she was dying, that both arms were already numb. An air of suspense filled the room. All the relatives expected her to

die. I assured them, however, that the patient was not only going to live, but that if they would leave the room and permit me to talk to her alone, she would recover in a few minutes. Thereupon, they left with great misgiving. When they had gone I turned abruptly to the patient. "Calm yourself," I said. "Breathe normally. If you don't control yourself within two minutes, I'll leave and you'll have to call another doctor." She wasn't fooling me; I had seen many other persons in a similar condition. I knew that if she would relax and breathe normally, she would soon be well.

She followed my orders and almost immediately the sensation of numbness left her hands and feet; her breathing became normal and she regained her self-composure. The problem then was to find out what was making the woman nervy and to correct this condition. It proved to be a case of nerves due to an impending divorce action.

CASE 98076: A young, hard-working chap consulted me a few days ago for the very common complaint of tightness in the neck, which he thought was due to a goitre. Further questioning revealed that he had given £30 to a quack for a so-called cure by the adjustment method of treating goitre. My examination disclosed that his trouble was only a functional nervous disorder. He had no goitre.

If people would only stop to consider the years of required preliminary work, followed by hours of daily reading, study and constant practice necessary for the development of a competent physician or surgeon, they would cease trusting their lives and the lives of those who are dear to them to the hands of second-rate imposters.

CASE 67233: A young married woman came for con-

sultation because friends and relatives had suggested that her nerviness, choking spells, and a tight feeling in her neck might be serious.

She was a tired-looking farm woman twenty-nine years of age who appeared to be at least ten years older. Her hands were large and apparently toughened by many years of manual labour. Her finger-nails were brittle, stained, and showed evident lack of attention. Her clothes, too, were neglected in keeping with her general appearance. Her face was drawn and her eyes stared as if she were fearful of some impending disaster. Her neck was scrawny, and as she twisted about uneasily in her chair, physical examination, including testing the heart and blood pressure and thyroid gland, confirmed the absence of serious complications.

Her story, however, revealed the cause of her symptoms. She was one of seven children born of a poor family and forced to work very hard at an early age. To escape the drudgery of her home life she was married at sixteen hoping thereby to lead a happier existence. By the time she was twenty-one she was the mother of three children and found life a greater drudgery even than it had been at home. Incredible as it may seem, she had never been farther than five miles from her home except on this particular visit to the doctor. Her life was patterned on a plan of monotonous routine.

At five o'clock she would get up, build a fire in the kitchen stove and start the oatmeal, help her husband milk the cows, dress and feed the children, hastily swallow a few mouthfuls of breakfast herself, clean up the kitchen, do the washing, ironing, cleaning or preserving, work in the garden and tend the chickens, prepare the noon meal, help her husband in the field and in

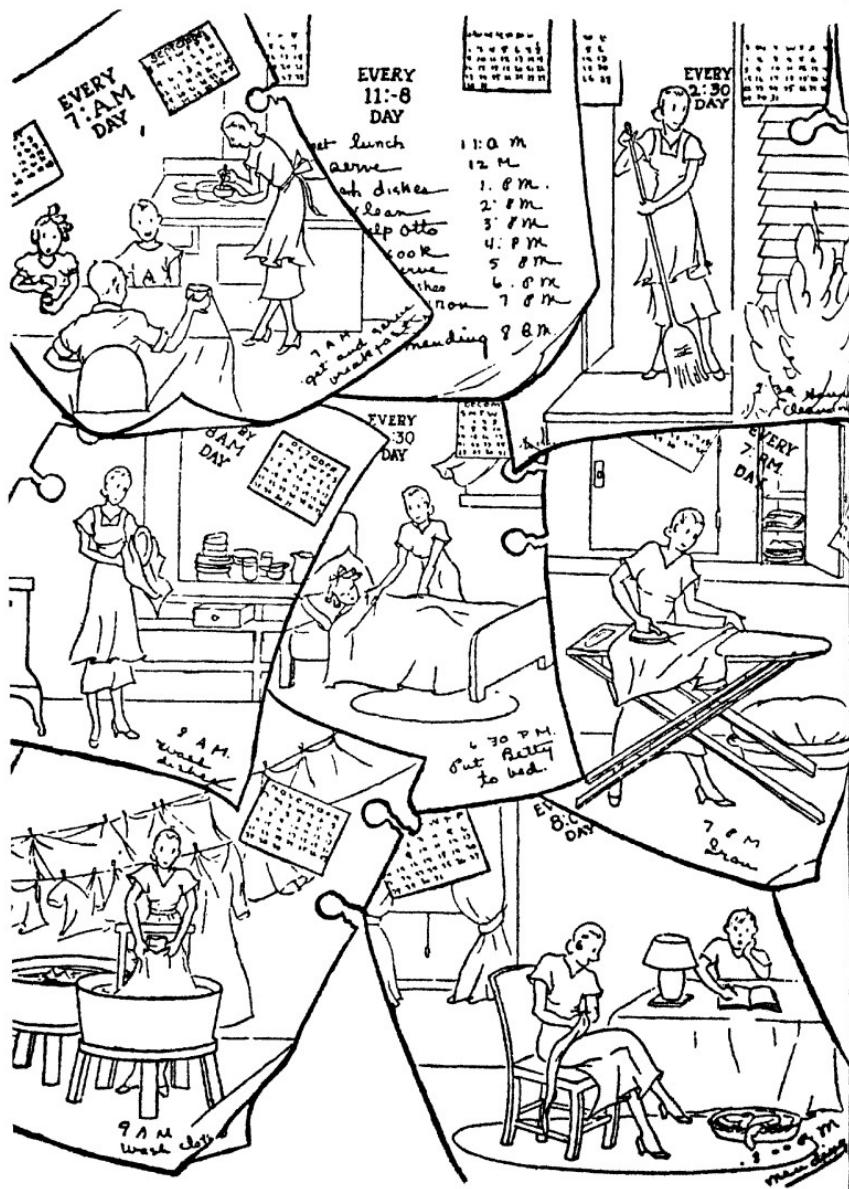
the barn, seeing, meanwhile, that the children took their naps, milk the cows again, prepare supper, clean up the dishes, put the children to bed, darn the socks, mend the clothes, and finally retire for a few hours' rest from her round^of weariness.

While it is true that the lot of many farm women is hard, and that some women in the city are equally care-worn, it is seldom that their existence is such a monotonous one as that endured by this young woman.

No one can continue carrying on the same duties day after day, year in and year out, without severely taxing his nerves. Sooner or later they become taut and strained. This may be interpreted as a choking sensation or tightness in the neck. Medicines, such as sedatives, may give temporary relief, but a real cure must be effected by getting at the basis of the trouble. In the case of this farm woman a change of scenery and environment was prescribed. I explained that while a trip to a near-by friend or relative might prove helpful, it would be far better to provide a complete change such as a trip to the city.

In disorders of this type, a mere change of scenery is insufficient; particularly if it lasts but a few days. I explained to this farmer that while he might save a few shillings by not hiring a maid, sooner or later he would probably have to pay out many times this amount for sanitorium bills, if his wife went on to suffer a complete breakdown. The knowledge that she did not have a goitre and did not need an operation gave them encouragement, but this alone could not relieve the tightness in the neck. The fundamental causes needed to be removed.

She needed some fun in her life. We discussed the possibilities. They had a car and small savings which



"One of the chief reasons why some farmers' wives are often nervously exhausted in mid-life is the drab monotony of their existences."

they had expected to use for hospital bills. There was a relative who would look after the children and good neighbours would keep up the farm work while he drove his wife to town and left her with a married sister. Part of the money was to be used for this trip and the rest for a maid for her when she returned home.

A month later I received a picture post-card from this woman. It was a view of the market yards. She wrote: "Feeling fine. Have attended International Livestock Show. Will be glad to get back to the farm."

CASE 82320: Not long ago a man dashed into my office and gasped: "My sister . . . in the hospital . . . She's dying. Come quickly!" I hurried up to her room and found on opening the door, a woman about forty years old, her face distorted with apparent pain, her hands clutched in front of her as though in a spasm or paralysis, her breathing noisy and rapid.

The appearance of her face and the position of the fingers at once suggested tetany. In adults this condition may be brought about through the removal or destruction of one or more of the parathyroid glands. These bean-sized elevations on the posterior surface of the thyroid gland govern the calcium metabolism of the body. Calcium is necessary in the body, not only to form the hardness of bones and teeth, but to help regulate the heart beat and the movement of other muscles. As has already been said, a condition closely resembling organic tetany may be produced by a nervous person breathing so rapidly as to produce a chemical change in the oxygen and carbon dioxide balance of his body. The arms are contracted, the thumb is pulled into the palm of the hand, and the fingers clenched tightly and stiffly

together. Recalling something of this woman's history and knowing the family background I felt at once that her trouble was of a functional rather than an organic nature. This assumption was further confirmed by a hurried examination of the neck. There was no scar, as from a thyroid operation that might have caused injury to the parathyroid glands. Words of firm assurance to both the patient and her brother brought about a speedy cessation of symptoms and as soon as the woman's confidence was restored she was assured that this annoying condition could only recur as the result of a highly emotional state and consequent rapid breathing.

CHAPTER IV

SUPERMEN

Too Fast a Pace

ONE day a patient, whom my colleagues thought would be of interest to me, came to the office. He was a big, husky, two-hundred-pound, six-foot-two man, who looked as if illness were unknown to him. After surveying his fine physique carefully, I asked: "What brings you here?"

"I'm all shot to pieces," he replied. "I'm a wreck; can't eat; can't sleep. I'm so nervy I can't sit still." He walked around as if addressing his remarks to various parts of my office. "Had a headache for two months and a pain in back of my ear."

"Surely, Mr. Johnson, you haven't been in this condition long. You have a good athletic build. How did you get into this state? Sit down and tell us about it."

"You wouldn't believe it, doctor"—he came to drop a cigarette stub in the waste-basket, but he did not sit down—"if I told you that in 1929 you could ignite dynamite beside me and I wouldn't jump. Why, I didn't have a nerve in my body, or at least I thought I didn't."

"Did you lose your life savings in the stock market?"

"No, I didn't have much to lose." He lowered himself into a chair. "I had a good job and I still have, but I won't be able to hold it much longer. I think I have worked too hard . . . too long hours."

"It's hard to believe that, because you could hardly work harder than some doctors I have known. At one

time I lived across the street from Dr. Will Mayo. He did not start in a little town and build a world-wide reputation for himself by taking life easy. He left home every morning promptly at seven-thirty to go to the hospital. There he would be on his feet almost constantly until twelve, one or even two o'clock, most of the time bending over the operating-table at grave and critical surgery. But he did take care of himself. After lunch he would return home to rest for an hour, a plan my father, who practiced surgery for fifty years, also followed. At ten o'clock every night, whether at home or away, Dr. Mayo would excuse himself after having asked his companions to stay and enjoy themselves. I don't recall ever having seen him smoke or drink. Such regularity and moderation in his habits of life enabled him to do great work until over seventy years of age. Do you take good care of yourself, Mr. Johnson? Smoke cigarettes?"

"I smoke about two or three packets a day." That was evident from his nicotine-stained fingers which were constantly tapping the arms of the chair.

"What about coffee?"

"That's another failing of mine; I drink about eight or ten cups of coffee a day."

"It is no wonder you can't sleep and that you are so nervy, you are like a wild animal in a circus wagon! Too much coffee and smoking, without a doubt, are the fundamental causes of your present condition. I am so sure of it because over a number of years I have seen a great many nervous wrecks like yourself.

"These people sought treatment complaining of all sorts of disorders. Some of them were sure that they had bad hearts or ulcers. A careful study, however, failed to reveal any evidence of organic disease. Medicine and

surgery were unnecessary for these people. It was essential only that they substitute milk and caffeine-free drinks for any other form of stimulating beverages; that they smoke only in moderation and live a well-balanced life free from worry and tension. No one has shown just what deleterious effect the nicotine from excessive smoking has on the system, but if you don't think nicotine is a poison, look in the dictionary, the encyclopædia or read some favourite murder stories."

Then Mr. Johnson asked: "But isn't smoking relaxing?"

How, When and What You Smoke

"That all depends upon how, when and what you smoke," I answered. "It certainly is not relaxing or conducive to a good stable system to pull out one cigarette after another from morning until night the way you do and after taking a few puffs throw it away and light another. On the other hand, to rest after dinner in a comfortable chair with your feet on a stool, the evening paper and a pipe, cigar or cigarette or two, is relaxation; under such conditions smoking may even prove a psychological aid to digestion. However, smoking excessively just before meals probably does not aid digestion and does lessen your appetite. Other factors of course play a part. The man who is out in the open air performing physical labour all day undoubtedly has a greater tolerance to nicotine than the business man who leads a sedentary life."

"What you say may be true, doctor, but I know a man who smokes eight or ten cigars a day and seldom gets any exercise except golf in the summer. Not only

that, but he likes strong cigars, and yet he is always saying how well he feels."

"Quite true. I personally know several such men. I have known many so-called supermen who, because they were lucky enough to have splendid physiques, were able to do far more than the average person. Sooner or later, however, when they were suddenly in need of reserve strength to combat an apparently non-serious disease, that very excess of energy which had carried them at top speed for many years was regrettably absent and they succumbed. Others, less robust, but more conserving of their health and more moderate in their habits, survive, while the supermen cannot endure.

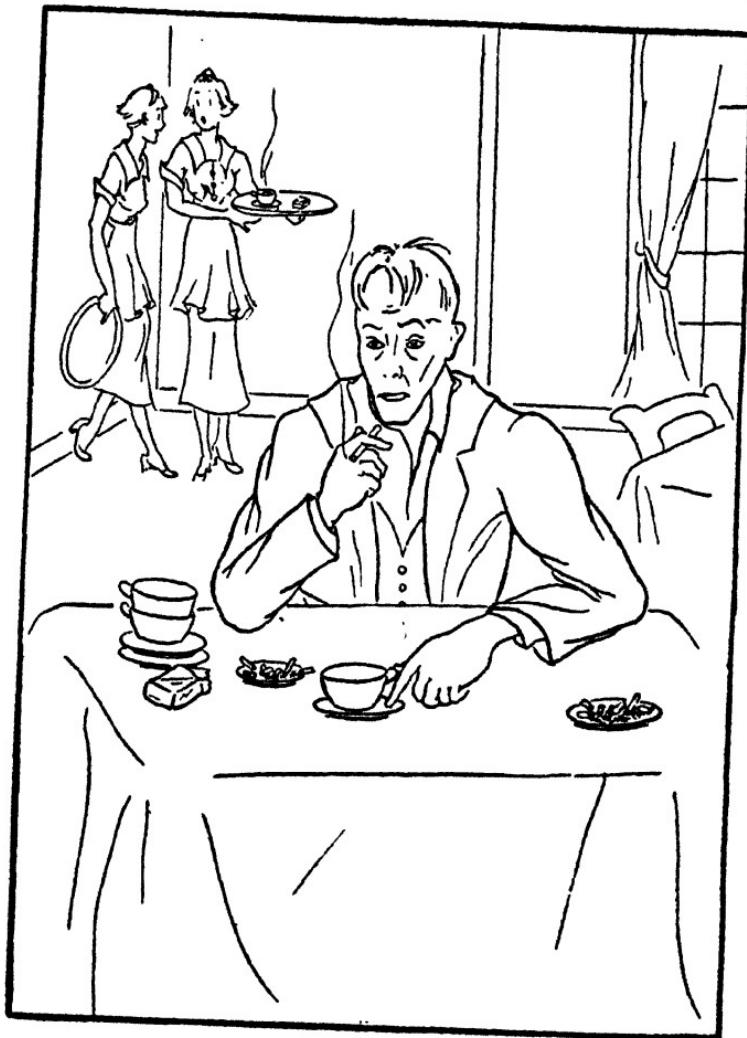
"Probably most of us at some time or other entertain the idea that we belong in the superman class and can abuse our bodies unmercifully. I recall one fine chap of about the same build as yourself whose picture you see there on the wall. He was six feet two and weighed over two hundred pounds, a remarkable specimen of physical perfection. He drove himself at a reckless pace as you have driven yourself. As a result he developed a complete breakdown of his nervous system. He underwent an operation and recovered his health so rapidly that he took up his old manner of living. He kept late hours, drank and smoked to excess, consumed large quantities of coffee and seldom rested. Within a year his trouble recurred. He realised that a second operation in his condition was hazardous but necessary. Fortunately, he made a good recovery and frightened by two successive breakdowns, he adopted a new plan of living and has continued in good health ever since."

Johnson's face was filled with anxiety.

"I'm scared, doc," he said, "for the first time in my life.

YOUR NERVES

45



*"I'm all shot to pieces. I'm a wreck; can't eat,
can't sleep,—so nervous I can't sit still."*

Do you think I'll ever be my old self? Any chance? I feel as if I'll go crazy!"

Change Gradually

"Chance? Why, of course, there is an excellent chance for you to regain your health provided you change your present pace; but unless you do, you will not only lose your job but soon find yourself in a sanitorium. First of all, you must gradually reduce your coffee and cigarettes, not all at once, because that would be too difficult; but diminish your coffee to two cups a day by the end of the week and omit it entirely next month. Tomorrow, be satisfied with one packet of cigarettes and use half that number a week from now. In a month train yourself to be satisfied with smoking a cigarette or two only after meals."

"I'll be glad to stop entirely today if you think it'll make me well."

"No, it is simple to say you will stop, but after smoking as heavily as you have, you will find that to stop suddenly will only irritate you and increase your nervous tension. If you reduce the cigarettes by two or three each day, you will have no trouble in getting down to a reasonable number in a short time.

"Of course cigarettes aren't the entire cause of your trouble. There are other factors to consider in regaining your health. You must learn to relax and overcome your tenseness. For instance, right now all your muscles are taut like a bow-string. Instead of sitting at ease on that chair, you are seated on the edge in an uncomfortable position. Most of the time your hands have been clasped tightly together or have been nervously adjust-

ing your tie or collar or otherwise engaged in purposeless movements."

Take It Easy

"I know," he nodded, "I just can't sit still."

"You mean you think you can't, but did you ever try? Just recline in that chair in an easy, relaxed position. Now then, start with your big toe and see if it feels all tied up in a knot, or is it at ease? Gradually relax all the muscles of your legs, arms and face. Assume an indifferent attitude of mind and body and indulge in pleasant reminiscences. For instance, imagine it is a balmy day in June; you are in a green meadow lying flat on your back under a spreading tree, watching the clouds roll by. Allow only pleasant thoughts to penetrate your mind. Practise that position of relaxation several times a day. Instead of reaching for a cigarette or poring over the stock reports, try to lean back in your chair, close your eyes for five minutes and dream you are a boy again out by the old swimming-pool, watching the turtles take a sunbath and the fish swim lazily around."

"That sounds fine, but if the boss caught me dreaming like that in the middle of the day I'd get fired."

"That may be true, but I doubt it, if you explain to him that the doctor wants you to take off a total of thirty minutes each day in rest and relaxation. I am sure he will understand. You will be worth far more to your company with these little intervals of rest in your working day, because you will give your brain an opportunity to catch up; you will think more clearly and consequently do better work."

"I also want you to take off an extra half-hour at noon and spend it walking briskly. Monday, Wednesday and

Friday, go to the Y.M.C.A. to play badminton or squash for thirty minutes, followed by a shower and rub-down. Since you are not over-weight but only soft, I would suggest that you continue a normal diet, drink plenty of water between meals and don't over-eat at night. If you want a hot drink, you may have a cup of weak tea, coffee substitute or milk.

Rebuild the Home Fires

"Finally, rehabilitate your home life. Put some life and fun into your evenings and get acquainted with your family again, instead of shutting yourself up in the den planning short cuts to business success. Fix up a cheerful recreation-room in your basement and put in a ping-pong table and some other games. Be a boy again and have fun with the kids. Too many business men are neglecting their young sons and leaving their training to mother. Interest yourself for an hour or so in your children's hobbies, in their nature study, their stamp collecting or moving pictures; after the children have gone to bed, settle down in a comfortable chair with your feet on a stool, enjoy a good story and relax until bedtime."

Mr. Johnson interrupted with: "But the trouble is I can't get to sleep; or if I do, I wake up and hear the milk-man."

"You mean you can't sleep now, but with your change in living, things will be different after a night or two. Do not attempt to go to sleep with an empty stomach, but at bedtime take a glass of hot milk, a malted milk, a glass of beer, soup, wafers or any other light, easily-digested food. Be sure you are warm enough but not

too warm. It is better to use light comforters than heavy blankets. Use a comfortable pillow which is neither too hard nor too soft, too large or too small. Have enough fresh air, but avoid draughts. Use a screen if necessary to shut out a glaring street light. When you go to bed, lie on the mattress, not on yourself. Let the bed hold you instead of trying to hold yourself on the bed. Relax, not only your tense muscles, but all your muscles. See if your brow is still furrowed with the day's problems or if your feet are drawn up in knots or if your fingers are still clenched. If your knees are drawn up and your legs are tense, stretch out, then let go. When you are physically settled for the night, forget your business cares and worries and let your mind rest also; visit the old swimming-pool again before you fall asleep."

B Cut down on smoking. Find a substitute for coffee. Take a daily walk. Learn to relax at intervals during the working day. Play games. Drink plenty of water. Eat moderately. Have fun at home. Eat lightly at bedtime. Enjoy the utmost comfort and relaxation in bed. Live a balanced life free from worry and tension.

That was, in brief, the only prescription I could conscientiously give to Mr. Johnson. It was not as spectacular as probing into some long-forgotten inhibitions of his childhood, nor as complimentary to his ego as putting him in a hospital and at great expense to him, removing part of his insides, nor was it as simple to take as little vitamin capsules, t. i. d. But Mr. Johnson accepted it and went off to put it into effect.

I have heard from Johnson three times since. The first

time he was enthusiastic. Cutting down on coffee and cigarettes and balancing his work and play, he said, made him feel like his old self. The second time I saw him he was despondent, on the verge of another collapse, he felt. A series of conventions and some important increases in his business had made him forget the old prescription. He had a kidney complication, however, which was scaring him into taking care of himself again. The last time I saw him he had bought fifteen acres out of town and built a country home. He had gained poise and seemed to be on top of Life instead of letting Life sit on his neck. His temperament is such that he can never adjust himself permanently to a well-balanced existence. But as he grows older the periods of over-activity are certain to grow shorter and those of well-ordered living to grow longer and longer.

Putting On the Brakes

Doctors would be happy if they could hand out neat white pills guaranteed to give results with little or no effort on the part of the patient. Such a practice would certainly be in keeping with the time-saving and labour-saving devices which are so popular today. But it happens that the human body is far more complicated than any machine which has ever been invented. One simple kind of treatment is not effective in a complicated condition like nerves.

People readily appreciate the fact that even the most expensive automobile cannot be taken and driven over bumps day after day without an occasional overhauling. Even if it is entrusted to a reliable mechanic, the time comes when squeaks develop here and there and it will

no longer run with the ease it once did. It can be oiled and painted and given new tyres, but an abused motor will not operate like a new one.

When we are young, our bodies, too, can be driven at a terrific pace for several years. Occasionally a body does rebel, but usually nothing serious happens. As we grow older our common sense should warn us to slow down and gauge our pace to our lessened powers of endurance. In general this change should begin shortly after graduating from college or at an equivalent age. Many a college man accustomed to a certain amount of daily physical exercise in school, is cut off suddenly from this outlet for his energy by a cloistered, sedentary business or professional life. Instead of tapering off his athletic career with golf, tennis, skating, squash, riding and the like, bridge, coffee, cigarettes, liquor, over-eating, and the radio are substituted. In place of the former trim athletic figure, at the ten-year college reunion we see a person fifteen or more pounds over-weight with a skin that was once fresh and healthy, now flabby and sallow. Even moderate exertion such as climbing stairs may leave this person's legs trembling and his heart beating furiously. He worries about a pain here and another there, a new sensation for one accustomed to laugh off a sprained wrist or a torn ligament in college.

At first only a little attention is given to this weakness and shortness of breath, but soon a life of inactivity, over-eating and drinking brings on constipation, sour stomach, fatigue, that tired feeling, backaches, leg-aches, headaches, insomnia, palpitation, irregular heart action and other ailments, none of which is serious, but the sum total of which is sufficiently annoying to cause

a man to ponder about himself. For the first time in his life, he begins to give some consideration to his body. But how! He seeks quick relief for his aches and pains by resorting to popular remedies such as aspirin, laxatives, seltzers and all varieties of patent medicine.

Breaking the Speed Limit

Feeling better for a time, he really does nothing to improve his mode of living. As one remedy after another fails to bring relief, he begins to worry more about himself. Probably he is now in the late thirties or early forties, has acquired a family along with definite responsibilities and obligations. His problem becomes more serious for he cannot afford to give in to his infirmities. He arrives home at night exhausted, but society demands that he continue to drive himself night after night at a killing pace. For a while he pretends to enjoy it, but in time the effort becomes a bore. Nevertheless it continues month after month and year after year. Every summer he goes with the family to a resort hotel for two weeks and, perhaps, goes off with the boys for a few days of shooting in the autumn; but this brief recreation ends all too soon, and again he is sucked into the maelstrom of financial affairs and club life.

He races along at a speed of eighteen hours per day activity, six hours per day sleep, twenty hours per day of business worry. His nerves are on edge, his family irritates him, his associates annoy him, the world in general is upside-down. Suddenly he is jarred into attention by the unexpected and startling death of a friend or colleague. This causes him to imagine that he, too, may have some similar fatal affliction. He reasons that since



"He arrives home at night exhausted but society demands that he continue to drive himself night after night at a killing pace."

his heart beats fast upon exertion, it must be weak. His headaches must be caused by high blood-pressure; his stomach distress is due perhaps to an ulcer, but probably to cancer. He dares not confide his apprehensions to anyone, not even to his wife. More and more he worries, and less and less he sleeps. He plans to see a doctor, yet keeps putting it off, dreading to hear a verdict too formidable to contemplate. At last, unable to continue any longer, he consults a physician.

He Reaches a Stop Sign

Upon arriving at the physician's office, he is very much upset on being told that he will have to wait a while as there are several people ahead of him. Accustomed to keeping his own engagements promptly, he impatiently wonders why doctors keep you waiting so long.

By the time his name is called, he has worked himself into a mild frenzy of impatience, fear and intolerance. He has come prepared for the worst, yet dreads to hear the truth. His impatience grows as the doctor asks questions relating to his family history. He cannot imagine why diabetes in his father, the number of children he has, or the number of miscarriages his wife might have had can in any way be connected with his present condition. He does not know that susceptibility to diabetes and tuberculosis may be passed on from generation to generation, that a number of healthy children indicate a strong physique, whereas multiple miscarriages indicate family weakness or disease. Resentful of the doctor's interruption of a seemingly important description of his complaints, he fails to realise that the former is attempting

to ascertain whether or not he is a victim of organic disease or nervous disorder.

From a medical standpoint, it is far more important to learn that the patient has lost twenty pounds in weight, as from an organic disease, than it is to find out that he has a pain in the back of his neck and insomnia, which usually indicates a nervous disorder. It is also necessary to discover if his appetite is normal, excessive, or poor. In certain organic diseases rapid loss of weight is frequently accompanied by a good if not ravenous appetite. In few other diseases does this unusual combination occur except in diabetes. On the other hand, in cancer of the stomach, both loss of weight and loss of appetite occur. This combination is found in many illnesses, particularly in nervous disorders.

It is also important, from a medical standpoint, to ascertain certain facts relative to pain. For instance, if a patient complains of the same gastric distress immediately after eating as he does before, in all probability there is no ulcer of the stomach. If he is not in the so-called cancer age, forty to sixty years, his trouble may be due to nervous indigestion, which is the result of eating too hurriedly or being under nervous tension at meal-time. However, pain occurring two hours after meals, when the stomach is empty, may be due to an ulcer.

Follow Instructions

When the physician has found from a careful history, physical examination and laboratory tests that the over-worked business man is suffering from a case of nerves and not from organic disease, he can expect to improve his patient's condition rapidly, provided the latter agrees to follow instructions. Unfortunately, once assured that

there is nothing physically wrong, many business and professional men assume that they can continue to plunge ahead safely at the same reckless pace. They may take a few weeks' vacation, cut down on cigars, coffee, and social activities for a time, but only too soon they are back at the same grind. After a time the constant high tension and pressure to which they are subjected may lead to a definitely serious trouble of an organic nature, such as high blood-pressure, or coronary sclerosis, both of which are taking a high toll of the business and professional leaders of this country.

Where To

Too many fine executives consider themselves supermen, with the ability to work long hours month after month and year after year without a vacation. The husband of one of my patients, an executive in charge of a wholesale industry covering a large and prosperous territory, told me today that he had not taken a vacation in twelve years. Although apparently in excellent health, he admitted that the strain had begun to tell. His excuse for not resting was that the business had fallen off considerably, and that pride had compelled him to work doubly hard in order to make a good showing for his company.

Pride and ambition are fine traits, but after working himself into an early grave, pride will make little difference, and his family will wish he had had less pride and more common sense. His friends will say: "Poor John, he was certainly a fine fellow, but he killed himself working, and what did it avail him? He never had a real vacation, although he was always planning a trip with them

to Scotland or the Continent. The company lost a good man, but they've already found someone to fill his place, and if this chap is wise, he will profit by John's experience." Persons who are endowed with strong physical constitutions, but who heap abuse upon themselves by indulging in an excess of nicotine, caffeine, alcohol, cards, long tense hours of business strain, along with an excess of food, lack of exercise, late hours, social demands and the stress of this high-speed mechanical age, have the stage set for a nervous breakdown at the prime of life, if not something far more serious.

Is It Recreation?

The executives, business leaders, bankers, lawyers and doctors, who struggle with serious problems all day, should not go home and try to soothe their nerves with heavy meals, large cigars, and exciting games of bridge. Nor should they rush out to the golf course to key up their nerves to an even higher pitch by betting something on every shot they play. There are men who work at double speed in the office to keep a golf date, eat a full meal in a few minutes, and then hurry to tee off, their comrades urging still greater haste in order to get ahead of the crowd. The same tension is kept up all afternoon because someone is either crowding them from the rear, irritating them by delaying their game in front, or offering to bet on the next shot. Many of these men finish a game more tired, irritated and upset than when they left their offices. If a man returns home from a game not only exhausted mentally and physically, but also discouraged because he is not playing in the low eighties, he is foolishly punishing his tired nervous system. Never-

theless, there is no better game or exercise than golf if played under the right conditions, that is, with a companionable foursome in mild weather, with nothing at stake that might cause one to press or slice.

Water, too, is a great nervine and more and more in these hectic days people are seeking the rivers, lakes and seas. This is noticeable especially on summer week-ends. The hazard and strain of motoring on the highways have become so great that motorists are turning away from the crowded roads to search for more peaceful spots. Sailing, canoeing, motor-boating, surf-riding, and swimming are gaining in popularity, just as interest has been revived in the winter outdoor sports, including skating. These exercises not only increase the circulation and pump fresh blood to the tired brain, but seem to eradicate that feeling of sluggish fatigue. People often remark that they are too old and decrepit to indulge in sports, but no one is ever too old to begin. One bright, crisp day last winter I was amazed and stimulated by the sight of a banker close to seventy years old skating with the agility of a youth and cutting various fancy figures on the ice. He took up fancy skating after he was fifty. Not long ago I saw a mother out bicycling with her baby in a side-car and her five-year-old son following on his tricycle.

Walking for pleasure has become regrettably almost an obsolete exercise, but how much better it would be for all of us to put our cars in the garage and walk briskly for a few miles every day or two.

The Climatic Urge

Mary Borden thinks the American climate has much to do with the increased speed at which Americans live.

She thinks that the climate is "too militant, too exciting. It is America's one great danger.

"It has produced," she says, "more skyscrapers, more machinery, more religious maniacs, more psychoanalysts, more nervous wrecks, more drunkards, gamblers and yellow journalists than any country in the world. Its keynote is extravagance. It is ultra-stimulating: it impels men to work, to undermine mountains, irrigate deserts, build cities in the sky, and fill the silent places of the earth with noise. It is not the spirit of Democracy in America that has fashioned a God out of the idea of Work. The worship of Work is, I insist, due to the climate."

Of living in England she says: "I was born under high and brilliant skies in a part of the U.S.A. where the seasons changed dramatically, where the fields in summer were scorched by a blazing sun and the woods of autumn turned suddenly scarlet in a single frosty night, and winter brought blizzards, muffled the snow-bound valleys in cold silence, and the spring after that, seemed a miracle. And so, when I was a woman and dined out in May in London, my arms all prickly with gooseflesh, and I discovered that a mackintosh, galoshes and an umbrella were to be my constant companions, I not only shivered but raged. Then I fell into such dark depression that I took to sleeping because, being a nervous American, I needed it, and because the English climate saw to it that I got what I needed, slowed me down to a proper tempo, wrapped me in a wet blanket guaranteed to bring down my mental fever, and saved me from the nervous breakdown that would surely have got me in Chicago, New York, Montreal or Berlin."*

*Reader's Digest, Feb. 1938, from Harper's.

Vacation Ordeals

Many of our citizens carry out the same general plan in regard to vacations that they do about the rest of their lives—to get as far, see and do as much as is humanly possible in the shortest period of time. Usually the hottest season of the year is selected, when both hotels and highways are crowded. Such trips are conducive to excitement, perspiration, prickly heat, indigestion, diarrhoea, cold sores, nervous exhaustion; almost anything in fact but peace of mind.

Some Canadians who were trying to see a little of England in five months were coming out of Warwick Castle regretting that an afternoon was all too short a time in which to see that splendid historic monument. As they passed through the gate a car dashed up, out stepped an American, watch in hand, who breathlessly asked the guard: "Can I see this place in fifteen minutes? That's all the time I can spare." The same Canadians met an American family at Oxford who were quite upset at arriving there five whole days ahead of their schedule. This extra time had accumulated because the long twilight hours in England had enabled them to continue their touring after dinner each evening and push on to the next town. They were dismayed because, having "done" everything, they had no plan for the five extra days on their hands!

Every autumn there are numbers of fresh nervous wrecks who date the onset of their breakdown to one of these wild, rushing, harrowing, nerve-wracking "vacation" trips. People, who are forced to work almost all year under excessive tension, certainly should avoid such vacation ordeals. A ten-days' cruise, an ocean trip,



"Most of our citizens carry out the same general plan in regard to vacations that they do about the rest of their lives . . . to get as far, see and do as much as is humanly possible in the shortest period of time."

if one is a good sailor, or a cabin in the woods would be preferable. In the inspiring lake district are dozens of peaceful lakes where excellent fishing, boating and swimming can be enjoyed. Go there and sit lazily in a boat absorbing the sun's rays while waiting for fish to bite; or dip into the refreshing water, or walk leisurely through the fragrant woods, forgetful of and far removed from the irritating rush of cities with their crowds, smells, hard pavements, whistles, rumbles and dirt.

CHAPTER V

NERVES IN THE NURSERY

Modern Children

JOHN and Nancy are modern children. They live in a city with bright street lights, animated signs, fire and ambulance warnings, big buses, congested traffic and motion picture theatres. Their home is equipped with electric lights by which they can read in bed and they have a bedside radio. There is also a radio, oversized, in the living-room of their home and one in their father's automobile. John and Nancy often go to their room and listen to accounts of war and air raids while from down-stairs come the sounds of blaring jazz music or political speeches.

Since they were babies John and Nancy have ridden almost daily in high-speed automobiles and heard the confusing noises of car radio and city traffic. They know the stimulation of country motor rides when telegraph-poles, fields, forests and buildings slip past in a constant race to the tune of dance music. They have a busy school programme with examinations, athletic contests and club work. They take dancing and music lessons and they are allowed to go to at least one movie a week.

When John's and Nancy's grandparents were young, they had tallow candles and paraffin lamps for light. They made music for themselves on an organ and a violin and found excitement in picking wild flowers, gathering nuts, skating or coasting in a peaceful country atmosphere. They did not have to be sent to bed. They

went to bed because they were tired and there was nothing else to do.

The question often arises: what is the effect on children of irritating stimuli such as bright lights, radios and movies of this modern world? Our children are subjected, without a doubt, to far more irritating stimuli than the children of past generations. With electricity turning night into day, babies are carried to the movies in the evening, and at every performance you see tired, irritable, restless children begging to be taken home and put to bed. In their growing years, they become child movie addicts, and their immature minds are subjected all too often to problems and sights which should be prohibited even to adults. Upon their own confessions, many of the youths who today crowd our approved schools received their early inspiration from the gangster pictures which held the spotlight for so many years. On the other hand, no one can deny that the cinema has excellent educational value provided parents are prudent in selecting good pictures for their children. The effect of the constant loud blaring radio on children's nervous systems cannot be estimated. Murder stories and sensational accounts of air raids cannot be conducive to restful sleep. Because of this added mental strain modern children should receive adequate physical compensation in the form of outdoor exercise and outdoor games. If too many indoor activities, such as music lessons, clubs and school plays are added to an already full schedule, the child may show signs of mental exhaustion and as a result become irritable, chronically tired, apathetic, pale and easily fatigued.

Many of the young people of today are actually burned out by the time they start work and all too often

this stage is reached while they are still at school. Is it any wonder with the heavy programme of school work, social obligations, smoking, drinking and late hours in which some indulge? The wise parent seeks to compensate for the extra burden imposed upon the nervous system of the youth of today by providing additional hours of rest and relaxation, and a complete change in summer by sending his children to camp or to the country.

Mental Proficiency and Mental Breakdown

Often too great stress is laid upon scholastic proficiency. Such urging is a mistake. Often very brilliant students have proved absolutely incapable of meeting and overcoming the everyday problems of life.

The son of a university president was once under my care. He was an "A" student, outstanding in scholarship, but before he was twenty-five, he had to be sent to the state hospital for the insane; an incurable nervous disorder, evidently brought on by mental fatigue. Why worry if children are not at the top of their classes, insofar as grades are concerned, provided that their work is satisfactory and that they engage in sufficient outside activities to give them a broader understanding of life. This can be overdone, of course. Moderation in both school work and outside activities should be encouraged. Naturally, we are all proud of our children's good reports, but let us not encourage mental proficiency at the expense of mental breakdown. It is dangerous to strive for brilliancy at the sacrifice of physical development.

Loss of sleep, probably more than any other factor, causes a child to become nervy. It is amazing the number

of parents who allow their children to stay up until nine or ten o'clock when they should be in bed at seven or eight. Children who are well and strong usually have long hours of sleep and an abundance of milk. If your child is easily upset, peevish, cries or loses his temper quickly, be sure he is getting sufficient sleep and that he is not being over-stimulated by evening entertainment, heavy meals at night, tea and coffee and reading thrilling stories in bed. Make sure his bed is comfortable, see that it is neither too short nor too narrow, and that his head is not buried in a large pillow. Fresh air is essential to a good night's rest, but too much cold air and an over-supply of bedding may cause the youngster to be restless.

Problems of Adolescence

As the child matures and enters the age of adolescence his body grows very rapidly, organs develop and he wonders at his own changed body and the strange thoughts that enter his mind. If parents can wisely guide their sons or daughters through this period, many future heartaches will be avoided.

Many of the sex problems which are brought to the attention of the physician, judge and social worker could be avoided if parents did not timidly refrain from discussing this subject with their children. At the present time, for example, it is estimated that there are 10,000 cases of syphilis. In many instances, this disease results in a complete degeneration of the nervous system.

The world would be spared an inestimable amount of suffering if parents had the courage and would take the time to approach sex with an open mind and answer all questions even those of the very young child honestly.

and without emotion. Before their children are sixteen, parents should discuss with them the unfortunate results of venereal diseases, not only on those who contract them, but on their descendants. The difficulty is that the majority of parents do not know enough about the subject themselves to discuss it with their children intelligently. Gradually, educators, physicians and parents are insisting upon having these problems taken up in school by people who are well qualified to teach them. There is no better place, however, than at home for children to become acquainted with this subject, if it is approached as an intensely interesting, but perfectly natural phase of development.

Dr. Thurman B. Rice, professor of bacteriology and pathology, has prepared a set of pamphlets for his medical association dealing with the problems of sex education. These booklets should be in every home. Dr. Rice is a physician, biologist, teacher and father, and, therefore, is well qualified to write on this subject. He approaches the topic from a modern point of view without sacrificing fundamentals and without sensationalism. The titles of these pamphlets are: "The Story of Life (for boys and girls ten years old); "In Training" (for boys of secondary school age); "How Life Goes on and on" (for girls of secondary school age); "The Age of Romance" (for both sexes of college age or older); "The Venereal Diseases" (for both sexes of college age or older). If children seem interested, these pamphlets may be given at an earlier age.

It is not within the scope of this book to enter into a discussion of sex and its relation to disturbances of the nervous system. That has been adequately treated by many authors.

Home Influences

Disturbances in family life account for many cases of nervous breakdown among those who consult a physician for their ailments. If a father has a tendency to drink to excess and create a considerable uproar when he comes home, such conditions may directly lead to a nervous breakdown on the part of the wife and pave the way for nervous disorders on the part of the children. It is obvious that the services of a physician are limited under such circumstances. To advise the mother to use sedatives, take a vacation, or find a change of scenery will not correct the evil for either herself or her children. In such a case, the minister, priest, or a close friend of the family may be in a position to advise. If a frank appeal to the father's sense of honour to change his habits in order to relieve his wife's mental anxiety meets with no response, it may be best for her peace of mind to separate from him until the situation is properly adjusted.

Any social worker, as well as any physician, knows that the husband cannot always be blamed for seeking an escape from his trouble. In April, 1940, a jury of nine women and three men acquitted a man of shooting his wife. Fifty neighbours, including the dead woman's sister, testified that his married life had been made miserable by the constant nagging of his wife. When a man has been working hard all day and perhaps labouring under such tension that his nerves are on edge, it is, indeed, unfortunate if his wife does not realise this and, instead of starting an argument at the slightest provocation, attempt to smooth over difficult problems and accept them philosophically. The children should also

be taught consideration when father comes home tired from overwork. Let them greet him cheerfully and run for his slippers and paper. Often-times fathers are the victims of nerves because mothers fail to provide a restful and cheerful atmosphere at home. The result is that the husband turns either to men or to other women for pleasant company. Many a regrettable domestic scene could be avoided if the wife would only understand that what a tired, worried man needs most at the end of the day is a peaceful meal and an hour's rest to restore his normal frame of mind.

There are, of course, two sides to every situation, and the mother who gets up early and works as hard or harder than her husband to make both ends meet may also be in need of kindness, sympathy and recreation when night comes. If the family is large and noisy, father should see that the children do the dishes without argument and that mother gets away to a good movie occasionally.

A Poor Example

The father and mother who succeed in creating a serene and genial atmosphere in their home are safeguarding their children's future more surely than with life insurance or with business success. To explain the peculiar actions of some neurasthenics, we need only to glance briefly into their past. One or both parents may have been of a neurotic type. The child is impressionable at a very early age. Perhaps there is a family quarrel, or the father drinks, or in a hundred other ways the child is exposed to unpleasant conditions which may have a permanent effect. If the father is subject to sick headaches, or the mother to fainting spells or indigestion and

the child hears these conditions discussed sufficiently often, the suggestion soon results in imitation. There comes a day when the child has to face a disagreeable school task. As a result he is a little upset and does not sleep well; his breakfast is not digested; his head feels a little queer, so he decides he must have one of those sick headaches like father's. He is sent to bed but recovers about the time school is dismissed. This plan, having worked once, may soon become a habit. From such habits neurasthenics are developed. And the most unhappy people a physician sees are the neurasthenics. The old man dying of cancer, the child with osteomyelitis, or even the mother whose baby has been killed by a car are none of them as exasperatingly unhappy and unpleasant as the neurasthenic.

Cases of Nervous Children Whose Symptoms Suggested Organic Trouble

CASE 91304: A seven-year-old boy complained to his parents for two weeks of attacks of pain in the lower abdomen. Usually these attacks came on about ten o'clock in the morning and it was necessary on several occasions for him to be sent home by the school nurse. After being put to bed, his condition improved and not infrequently by the latter part of the afternoon he was feeling well enough to go outside and play. He complained most bitterly during the fore part of the week, but after resting a few days he seemed well enough to play during week-ends.

The boy was brought to the clinic to determine whether or not he was suffering from appendicitis. This story was elicited: the previous year he had done satisfac-

tory work at school, but, because the building was located in a rather rough section of the city, he was frequently picked upon by the boys of the neighbourhood. Consequently this year he had been transferred to another school. There the teachers were far more strict. The boy stated, for example, that because of some minor mistake he was made to write the word "there" 500 times. His arithmetic especially proved distasteful to him. This class was held at ten in the morning. It was about this time every day that William began to feel "an awful pain" in his belly. It soon became necessary for him to be sent home.

Examinations revealed no apparent evidence of appendicitis and William was allowed one of two things. If he was sick, then he was to stay in bed and have only a light diet, such as bread and water, and an occasional enema, or else he was to knuckle down to work and do better in school. It was suggested to the parents that they talk the situation over with his teachers and try to straighten out his school problem. This advice was followed and William has had no more attacks of pain.

CASE 94775: A ten-year-old boy was operated on for appendicitis two years before being brought to the clinic. Following the operation he had kidney trouble for a few weeks, together with attacks of abdominal pain lasting from five to fifteen minutes several times a day. These attacks continued in spite of all treatment by the local doctor for nearly two years. The boy was finally sent to the clinic to rule out the possibility of intestinal disease. During the examinations it was necessary to check the kidneys and bladder.

The results of all examinations were normal and it appeared that the boy was suffering from some mental complex. It was decided to assure him that following the kidney examination his trouble had been relieved and he would suffer no further attacks. He was told that it was necessary for him to remain at the hospital under observation until such time as his parents could be told that he was free of the trouble. Then word would be sent to them to come and take him home.

In the meantime a message was quietly given to some of the other doctors and patients to tell the boy how pleased they were that he was now cured. The plan worked very successfully and the boy did not experience any more attacks of pain. At the end of ten days he was allowed to go home, cured by mental rather than physical therapy.

Of course, children, like adults, may have headaches or pain in the abdomen and there may be a logical reason for them, such as eye strain or appendicitis; but parents might save themselves trouble in later years by refraining from discussing their own mental and physical ailments in the presence of their children. I have had neurotic mothers bring in as patients equally neurotic daughters. Here, indeed, is a problem that may well tax the ingenuity of any physician. Certainly, unless the parents may be made to change their point of view, the outlook for the daughters is discouraging.

CASE 98341: Recently a mother brought in her thirteen-year-old daughter, Norma, because she was nervy, unable to sleep and had not yet begun to menstruate. Norma was rather apathetic, pale and under weight. Her skin was of a poor texture and lacked the usual rosi-

ness of children of her age. There was no sparkle in her eyes but rather dark circles beneath them. Her arms and legs were thin and the fingers long and delicate. The nails were short and irregular due to biting.

General physical examination, however, as well as routine laboratory tests disclosed no evidence of disease. On questioning the mother it was evident that the child seldom went to bed before ten o'clock. Long hours of practising the piano made it necessary for her to stay up late at night in order to keep up her school work. Too little time was allowed for healthy outdoor sport. The mother admitted that her daughter could not skate and was a poor swimmer compared to other girls of her age. She was proud, however, that the girl had recently won a much-coveted music scholarship. This, in her mind, more than compensated for the lack of ability in sports.

Although it was now midsummer, the girl was practising several hours a day in order to take part successfully in the annual music festival. In recent years there has been a great emphasis on having children spend the summer months working at their music. This practice is commendable when it is not carried on at the expense of the child's health. In most parts of the country there are so few months of warm sunny weather that children should be given every opportunity to exercise out-of-doors during the summer. For those children who are not physically strongly constituted it is better to stop all indoor activities such as music and reading during the summer months. These children should be literally turned out to pasture.

Such was the advice to Norma's mother. With much doubt she agreed to try these suggestions and sent the girl to a summer camp. Six weeks later she returned with

Norma now ten pounds heavier, well-tanned and with a jolly sparkle in her eyes. The child had begun to menstruate normally and the mother was happy over the improvement in the daughter's appearance. She readily agreed thereafter to limit Norma's hours of practise and to plan a definite programme of outdoor activities for the child.

CHAPTER VI

NERVOUSNESS DUE TO GOITRE

Simple Goitre Does Not Cause Nerves

ALTHOUGH no attempt has been made in this book to consider the many organic causes for nervous symptoms, a short discussion of the relation between them and goitre is necessary, since so many people are nervy because of a goitre which they have or think they have. Not all persons afflicted with goitre are nervous. Many young people who have the simple or colloid goitre exhibit no signs of nervous tension due to goitre. Nevertheless, a brief discussion of simple goitre is appropriate here.

Apparently, simple goitre is due to a lack of iodine in the soil and water and is more easily prevented than any other known disease. Yet some surveys have shown that in some States of America sixty per cent or more of girls between the ages of ten and twenty years to be afflicted with goitre. The State of Michigan officially adopted the use of iodised salt in 1924 as a preventive measure, and health officials of that state feel that this procedure has been effective. There has been some disagreement, however, among authorities as to the effectiveness of this method, particularly since the iodine content of salt has been shown to vary considerably from time to time even in the same product.

In such districts goitre in children can and should be prevented by the use of small amounts of iodine in the form of a chocolate-coated tablet administered weekly

throughout the school year under the direction of the family physician. Since goitre is about six times more common in the female than in the male, it is desirable to give iodine to all girls between the ages of four and twenty-one years, and its use should not be overlooked in boys. Iodine should be administered also during pregnancy, under a physician's direction, as a protection to both mother and child.

Toxic Goitre Causes Nervousness

What has simple goitre to do with nervous disorders? Simple goitre leads to a nodular type of goitre that may cause nerves. This second, or nodular type of goitre develops from the simple or colloid type where preventive measures have been neglected. In middle age this kind of goitre may become toxic. Toxic goitre usually causes nerves and loss of weight and strength. It may also incur serious and permanent damage to the heart, and development of high blood pressure. These symptoms appear very gradually and insidiously, so that for months and even years the patient gives little concern to his condition.

Although this type of goitre does not cause the eyes to become prominent, it acts upon the heart, causing development of irregular rhythm and degeneration of the heart muscle, with consequent impaired circulation and swelling of the ankles. Perhaps this edema or swelling, which may become generalised, is the first symptom to attract the patient's attention to his condition; while an increasing tendency to nervous instability, together with insomnia may suggest to relatives that all is not well.

There is nothing characteristic about the nervous

phenomenon in this type of goitre, and the symptoms vary according to the individual, time of life, and other circumstances. Toxic symptoms are observed most frequently between the ages of forty-five and sixty years. If the patient is a woman undergoing the menopause, all the toxic symptoms are aggravated. Hot flashes turn into heat-waves which may cause the patient to break out into profuse perspiration. Emotional upsets at the most trivial provocation are liable to occur; nervous and mental fatigue develop after slight exertion, dizzy spells are of common occurrence, while severe headaches may leave the patient in a state of exhaustion, and insomnia is aggravated by a nervous tension and pounding heart which tend to prevent rest and relaxation. Temporary respite is gained through the use of ill-advised sedatives, but these merely disguise the slowly progressing symptoms of toxicity. Tremor of the fingers of the outstretched hand and weakness of the knees upon climbing stairs are further indications of impairment of the nervous and muscular system.

High Blood Pressure

If the patient is a man, his attention may be first called to the seriousness of his condition by a test of his blood pressure during a periodic health check by his physician. Elevation of the blood pressure usually precedes other signs of toxic goitre, and not infrequently the blood pressure may register well over two hundred in a patient showing few other signs of toxicity. In man, however, the same drive and keyed-up energy that usually go with high blood pressure are not manifest in toxic goitre of this type, and there is rather a sense of fatigue and general

weakness; while in cases of high blood pressure not due to goitre, there is a tireless urge and ceaseless drive.

If the goitre is removed before permanent damage to the heart, kidneys and vascular system has occurred, the chances of complete restoration of health are excellent. The patient gains in weight and strength, insomnia no longer troubles him, the tremor disappears, and his nervous equilibrium is restored. The change in a few months is remarkable. Too often, however, conditions have progressed to such an extent that the patient is affected permanently. A heart irregularity with impairment of circulation persists, while the blood pressure slowly increases, and congestion of the liver and other vital organs results. Finally, the patient may become bedridden or a cerebral haemorrhage may occur as a result of hypertension.

All this is unnecessary and preventable. Physicians have a far greater knowledge of goitre and its treatment now than they had two or three decades ago, and in most cities there are doctors who are well qualified to operate and care for people with toxic goitres. The fallacy of attempting any other remedial measures, at least as far as the toxic nodular type of goitre is concerned, is well-established.

Patent Medicines Are Dangerous

In spite of numerous laws and regulations in America there are not enough to protect human beings from the hundreds of fake cures of all kinds which deceive them. There are strings of magnetic beads which are guaranteed to remove all disfigurements of the neck; there are pink and yellow pills, brown and green salves, all of

which are harmless, but, needless to say, without medical benefit. Very serious, however, are certain remedies in liquid form containing iodine, which may bring about toxic symptoms in a nodular goitre. In 1922 a medical journal published a report of such a nostrum which was found to contain ferrous iodide. This patent medicine seriously affected a number of people who had nodular goitres and even caused the death of a prominent lawyer. Fortunately, exposure of this remedy resulted in its speedy extinction, but in the meantime still others have developed to take its place. Recently, the Government had under investigation a concern doing a tremendous business manufacturing fake cures and action is promised against another concern.

People should not allow themselves to be misled by glowing testimonials and offers of letters from supposedly cured patients, since these supposedly cured patients are usually decoys of patent medicine concerns and receive substantial compensation for every testimonial they write.

Nervousness Due to Exophthalmic Goitre

Exophthalmic (inward) goitre is as different from simple goitre and from nodular goitre as chicken-pox is different from measles. The nervousness which accompanies the exophthalmic goitre is distinctive. Persons afflicted with exophthalmic goitre make unnecessary movements without any purpose. They become so restless that it is impossible for them to keep their hands and feet still for more than a few minutes, and in this way they resemble children suffering from chorea. Of course, not all are affected similarly, and the disease may assume

forms that resemble heart trouble, stomach trouble or other diseases. Nevertheless, upon entering a sick-room, the doctor suspects at once the possibility of a toxic goitre of this type if he observes that the patient is picking constantly at the coverings and tossing about in bed, often causing the elbows and knees to become chafed from constant friction with the sheets. Likewise, such patients may be unstable emotionally, and regardless of sex, burst into tears at the slightest provocation. It is a mistake to attempt to argue, advise, or reason with them at the height of their toxicity. One can only hope for sufficient co-operation from the patient to lessen the severity of the disease through proper medication and treatment.

The onset of symptoms may be either gradual or abrupt. Just what causes the disease remains a mystery. Undue and prolonged mental and physical strain, such as the care of a sick relative, appear to be factors in some instances; while in others severe psychic shock or fright such as is caused by an accident, seems to precipitate the trouble. Infection may be the initiative cause, and frequently patients develop the disease after an attack of influenza or tonsillitis. In most cases, however, none of these conditions predispose to the goitre. Without any warning, a patient will begin to lose weight rapidly in spite of a ravenous appetite; this is one of the cardinal signs of the disease, and this condition is simulated by no other malady except diabetes. It differs in marked respect from malignancy of the gastro-intestinal tract in which loss of weight is accompanied by loss of appetite.

In spite of loss in weight, the patient with exophthalmic goitre is keyed up to a high tension, and has such tremendous nervous energy that for a time many tasks are

accomplished speedily. The business man is apt to put in extra hours of work and hurry from one conference to another. There is an intensity and a relentless driving force in his work which does not permit him to determine the best solution of the problems which arise, and he depends upon snap judgment and rapid decisions. It is almost a waste of time to attempt to advise such patients until the disease is under control, because most advice is forgotten a few minutes after it is given.

A Typical Case

A woman comes to a physician's office with rather an excited, staring look, fumbling for her pocket-book or some other article as she nervously approaches to shake hands. Her hand trembles, her skin is warm and moist, and her palm is usually damp with perspiration. She sits down, and almost immediately her hands and feet are in motion. She fusses with her hair, wipes her face, beats time with her foot, smoothes her dress, and makes a dozen other movements. She begins to talk and rambles on incoherently from one thought to another. Usually she minimises her symptoms in marked contrast to the neurasthenic patient who tries to amplify her troubles. With some difficulty the fact is elicited that she has lost thirty pounds in weight during the past three months, and further questioning reveals that for several months she has been hungry all the time, even after the completion of a meal, although her appetite may have failed rapidly during the past month. This increased appetite is the result of an increased metabolism (the building up and breaking down of the body cells) and the excessive demand for a source of energy to meet the greatly stimu-

lated nervous and physical activities. A small woman of one hundred and fifteen pounds frequently consumes as many calories of food in a day as a hard-working field labourer. Therefore, in order to meet this loss of weight, it is necessary to increase the caloric intake of 3,500 to 4,000 calories a day by eating frequent snacks between meals.

When this patient with exophthalmic goitre is placed on iodine, the effect is amazing. Within a few hours the extreme restlessness begins to abate; the rapid-pounding heart gradually quiets down; the trembling fingers become steady again; the eyes no longer appear to protrude; strength returns to shaky knees; intolerance to heat disappears; the sense of suffering and shortness of breath leaves, and finally quiet, peaceful sleep returns. The appetite remains either good or improves and soon the patient regains weight. After a few weeks on iodine, the metabolism may return to normal, and to all outward appearances at least, the patient may appear well. Even the physical examination may reveal little. This is the time to operate, for without surgery the disease persists, and even if iodine is continued, the metabolism begins to rise again; the heart becomes rapid and irregular, indicating damage to the muscle; restlessness, nerviness and insomnia return and then the patient has passed the most favourable time for operation.

Nerves Not Due to Goitre

While nerves are a constant symptom in cases of toxic goitre, it is a common complaint likewise in persons whose thyroid glands are normal but who imagine they are afflicted with goitre. These people often spend many

miserable months or years thinking that the tightness and choking sensations of their necks are symptoms of goitre. As a matter of fact, patients suffering from large outward goitres seldom complain of this condition. It is a very real complaint, however, both in persons of nervous temperament and in those subjected to unusual nervous strain. Although the patient may complain of nervousness, palpitation of the heart, insomnia, tremor, tightness in the neck, and loss of weight, examination of the thyroid gland and a normal metabolism test usually eliminate the possibility of goitre, and the condition is relieved quickly if the proper adjustment is made. This means a mental, not a spinal adjustment.

The Metabolic Test

Many persons fearing the possibility of a goitre worry themselves into a condition of nervous exhaustion. This fear might be eliminated readily by consulting a physician and, if necessary, having a metabolism test made by an accurate technician with a reliable machine. A metabolism test determines the degree of activity of the thyroid gland, that is, whether it is over-active or not active enough. The test is made by having a patient breathe into a mask which supplies fresh air from an intake tube and at the same time collects through an outgoing tube the air which the patient exhales. This expired air is then analysed and the patient's rate of metabolism determined. If the test results in a reading of zero and plus or minus ten per cent, the test is considered normal. In toxic goitre the test may frequently register as high as five or six times normal. When there is a deficiency of the thyroid gland the test reads as low as

minus twenty or thirty per cent. If the test is above normal the patient is liable to be nervous, but if it is below normal he may be phlegmatic and sleepy. If the patient is unduly nervous and breathes rapidly, his test may register high in spite of the fact that his thyroid gland is normal. A normal test is of value in eliminating the possibility of toxic goitre in persons suspected of having this condition. On the contrary, an elevation of the test above normal does not necessarily mean that the patient has a toxic goitre. Rapid breathing from a nervous cause, fever, exercise, food, and difficulty in breathing are among the several reasons for causing an elevation of the test.

CASE HISTORIES

CASE HISTORY: A medical colleague reported the following case. The patient was a middle-aged man, director of a zoo. For several months he had complained of gradual loss of strength and weight. He had noticed that when he sat down on a park bench he found it very hard to get up. The muscles in his legs seemed to have lost their strength. As a consequence he would walk for hours rather than sit down. On climbing stairs he noticed especially that his knees failed to support him. One night when he went to the theatre he found it impossible to get out of his seat and he had to call an usher to assist him.

Although he had lost over fifty pounds in weight during six months, his appetite had been better than usual until the past few weeks. At times he would eat a very hearty meal and yet within an hour find himself suffering from hunger pains. Occasionally he noticed

that his heart pounded or that he was short of breath. He had undergone various forms of treatment. Because of a rapid pulse and swelling of the ankles he had been treated for both heart and kidney trouble. His main complaint aside from weakness and loss of weight was an inability to sleep which he thought was due to nerves. Although he was a man of large stature and powerful build who normally weighed over 250 pounds, he frequently burst into a crying spell during the course of a conversation. He was so nervy and irritable that his wife found it difficult to avoid family quarrels, although before this sickness he had been a happy, jovial type of person.

This combination of symptoms, loss of weight accompanied by an abnormal appetite, at first excessive, but later failing, together with nervousness, inability to sleep, weakness, pounding heart, shortness of breath, increased tendency to sweating, tremor of the fingers and often staring of the eyes, are characteristic of exophthalmic goitre.

The spectacular results which follow the use of iodine in exophthalmic goitre were a revelation to this man and his wife. Within three days his nervousness had largely subsided. His heart no longer palpitated, and he was able to enjoy a comfortable night's rest. Following the removal of his goitre, ten days later, he rapidly regained his weight and strength and within a short time was able to resume his usual duties. That was nearly twenty years ago, and he has been in robust health ever since. Competent surgeons are obtaining such results everywhere in the treatment of this type of toxic goitre.

CASE HISTORY: This woman came several hundred miles

to consult a colleague regarding a goitre operation. She had been told that she had a goitre and she came accompanied by two priests and a nurse, having adjusted her mind to the fact that she had to have an operation. She was a very nervy individual who complained of fatigue on even mild exertion. Although she said that her appetite was never good, she had not lost weight. Not only was her blood pressure normal, but there was no visible or palpable enlargement of the thyroid gland. On mounting the step of the examination table there was no weakness of the legs so typical of inward goitre. It was apparent to my colleague that she had none of the characteristic symptoms of toxic goitre.

She had brought with her the report of a metabolism test, which was quite high and which in itself would indicate that she did have a toxic goitre. Such errors in the metabolic test occur frequently, especially in nervy individuals who breathe rapidly. It is unwise to accept a single metabolism report as conclusive evidence of the patient's condition. In this instance another carefully supervised test in my colleague's office gave a normal report thus confirming the clinical findings of a normal thyroid gland.

Surgery is an art, and a man with clever and well-trained hands can perform near miracles with body tissue, but the dean of doctors is the man who has all his faculties, observation, touch, judgment and imagination so cultivated that his diagnosis is always dependable.

CASE HISTORY: A young man came to a clinic bearing a letter from his family physician stating that in this case there had been puzzling symptoms perhaps due to toxic goitre. There had been two metabolic tests of rates

above sixty or approximately six times normal. There was very little, however, in the history or examination of this youth to indicate that he was suffering from exophthalmic goitre. It was true that he had lost about twenty pounds, but this was over a period of two years. Whereas in exophthalmic goitre weight loss is often rapid and accompanied by a good appetite.

The boy seemed greatly concerned about himself with a tendency to magnify all his symptoms. The story the boy told was that his parents had died some years before and that the care of the home and a younger brother had become his responsibility. He did the housework, including the cooking, bed-making and dusting and in other ways performed the duties of woman of the house. This had given him an abnormal viewpoint on life and he had grown introspective. He had developed numerous complaints, all of which were trivial. As he was under-weight and his heart rate was increased, it seemed advisable to check his metabolic rate.

His first test was high, but only approximately half as high as those previously reported. In such doubtful cases iodine is sometimes given as a test. If the patient is suffering from an exophthalmic goitre his general condition will greatly improve and the metabolic rate will drop fifteen or twenty points. If his condition is not due to goitre, little or no improvement will occur. Within a few days after iodine was begun, the young man returned saying that he felt so badly he must have further treatment.

He was put to bed in a hospital; the iodine was stopped. He was given mild sedatives, a high caloric diet, large doses of Vitamin D and a psychiatrist was called in. At the end of a week the patient had gained four pounds

in weight and seemed generally improved. Many of his problems were smoothed out by the psychiatrist, who also made him realise that his heart was perfectly normal, although at times it might beat fast.

After a few more days of this treatment he was sent for another metabolism test, which registered + 12. Thus the possibility of a toxic goitre was definitely ruled out. With a readjustment in his home situation so that he received three regular balanced meals a day, he continued to improve rapidly, and within two months had gained twenty-five pounds.

CASE HISTORY: The following report was given by a physician. A young woman about twenty-five complained of gas on the stomach and tightness in the neck. Although she was the picture of health, she was concerned about herself. She thought she might have a goitre. She had been advised some months previously to have a metabolism test. As this had registered a little above normal, she had gradually grown to believe she must be nervy because of a goitre. Upon physical examination, nothing abnormal was found nor was there any evidence of a goitre. The laboratory tests likewise showed a normal condition of the blood and urine. An analysis of the stomach acids disclosed a mild hyperacidity, a condition usually found in nervy, high-strung persons. It was difficult to understand why a young woman so physically well-developed should be so anxious about herself. Outwardly she was calm and poised and would never be considered nervy. Although her past history was gone into very thoroughly in an attempt to see if the factors responsible for her present state of mind could be discovered, nothing of importance was found.

Unlike some patients, she was considerably relieved to find that her nerviness was not the result of a goitre or stomach trouble. She is making an earnest attempt to control herself and will undoubtedly succeed in time.

CHAPTER VII

SHE WANTED ATTENTION

Her List

ABOUT five o'clock on a hot July afternoon, my secretary said that there were still three people waiting, one of whom, a Mrs. Clydebotham, was apparently quite ill and needed immediate attention. Although she came after the others, I asked that she be brought in first. At once there appeared at the door a grey-haired, apathetic, pale, yet able-bodied person, supported on one side by a woeful, obedient husband and on the other by an attentive nurse.

Something in Mrs. Clydebotham's manner indicated that she would want a long consultation. Her pessimistic facial expression suggested the probability of a case of nerves. What a contrast to the frequently cheerful, optimistic, tubercular patient, who is sure he is getting better!

As I began to question Mrs. Clydebotham, it appeared that she had a great many complaints. Yes, she was nervy, she could not sleep, her appetite was poor, her digestion has been bad for years, her heart beat fast, and she was so troubled with gas that she could not refrain from immediately belching to assure me this condition was real rather than fancied. There were several other complaints I do not recall, but just as I thought, they were all recorded, out came a sheet of paper to refresh her memory and she read them from the beginning.

YOUR NERVES

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"There appeared at the door a middle-aged apathetic yet able-bodied individual, supported on one side by a sad faced obedient husband and on the other by an attentive nurse."

Mrs. Clydebotham's list of complaints:

nerviness	bitter taste in the mouth
insomnia	heart-burn
poor appetite	pains around the heart
indigestion	fleeting pains in back of neck
rapid heart-beat	constipation
gas on stomach	home-life unbearable

Just Appendicitis

Considerable time had now elapsed and other patients were waiting, who were undoubtedly tired and perhaps had other engagements to keep. Consequently, while Mrs. Clydebotham was preparing for examination, I went into another office and in a few minutes diagnosed and referred to the hospital for operation a young man suffering from acute appendicitis. Returning to Mrs. Clydebotham in less than fifteen minutes, I was surprised when she said: "Doctor, you know we have come a long way and you have kept us waiting a long time."

It was unfortunate, indeed, that she had not been kept waiting a little longer so that the boy with acute appendicitis might have received attention first. When she heard about the boy and why she had been left waiting, a new expression came into her eyes which thus far had shown only self-pity. She at once became quite solicitous for the boy. It had not occurred to her until she entered my office that other people might not only be ill but even more dangerously so than she was.

Further questioning disclosed that as a girl she had enjoyed unusually good health and that she had been well and strong in the early years of her married life.

She had raised a family of three strong children, two of whom were working while the third lived at home. She had been a social leader; she entertained often; she was chairman of the church committee; and president of the literary club; member of the little theatre and the woman's committee at the country club. About five years previously, her husband, who held an important position in their local bank, had lost not only his position but his home and savings. The children had been compelled to drop out of school. This had worried her. She had let first the cook go and then the maid. She ran her house efficiently and tried also to keep up her church and club work. Then she developed indigestion, and she had been under the care of their family physician for several months. He had examined her carefully and assured her that there was nothing seriously wrong. He had prescribed various medications in an attempt to relieve her indigestion, rapid heart and other complaints, but these were abandoned without success. Finally, some neighbour persuaded her to seek the help of a physician in a near-by town. He felt that her trouble was probably due to nerves, but in order to rule out the possibility of ulcer or gallstones, he advised an X-ray examination. Being the type of person who does not readily take advice, she decided to go home to think it over.

In Search of Health

Instead of following his advice, she began self-medication, trying first plain soda, then various laxatives, and finally one patent medicine after another. Next came the chiropractor, followed by the usually short period of

improvement which had followed each new form of therapy she had tried. Her condition gradually became worse. She knew she was ill. Then the same determination which had previously kept her from completing her examination made her return to the roentgenologist for an X-ray examination. Much to her surprise and apparent disappointment, this examination disclosed a normal stomach and gall-bladder. The physician, therefore, assured her that operation was unnecessary and told her that she would soon be well if she would return home and forget about herself. This seemed easy advice to follow, and Mrs. Clydebotham was better for a few days; but with the first spell of nervous indigestion, she resorted to her patent medicine-chest and the troubles started again. Once more she sought the advice of the family physician, who suggested that she go to a clinic for a complete physical examination and laboratory tests.

After the physical examination was completed, Mrs. Clydebotham was told that the findings thus far were essentially the same as those of the two physicians who had previously examined her. In other words, there was no evidence of organic trouble. Two days were then spent making laboratory tests, and when Mrs. Clydebotham returned for further consultation, considerable time was allowed for discussion of her case. She had been given no less than ten laboratory tests, including several X-rays, all of which were normal.

I began: "Now, Mrs. Clydebotham, you say that you are very nervy and that frequently you are unable to sleep before midnight, is that correct?"

"Yes, that is right, doctor. I get up more tired in the morning than when I go to bed. I usually retire before nine o'clock, and as I have a troubled sleep, I may stay



"You were a society leader in your town. You
burned the candle at both ends—but after a
few years you began to break."

in bed until nine or ten o'clock. Mr. Clydebotham, or one of the children brings my breakfast up to me."

Causes of Insomnia

The idea that the body requires nine or ten hours of sleep is erroneous. Seven or eight hours of sleep are sufficient for average adults. Many persons retire early, and because the world stays up later than it did in the pre-electric era, they are kept awake by traffic and other extraneous noises. As a result, they toss, twist, turn, fret and worry about how wretched they will feel the next day. They actually sleep longer than they realise, but by breakfast time, imagining themselves exhausted, they persist in dozing into the middle of the morning.

Probably everyone at some time or other has experienced spells of insomnia. Whenever people suffer periods of undue mental stress accompanied by worry and lack of physical exercise, insomnia is likely to occur. It may soon become a habit, but it is not serious enough to worry over. I recall making rounds one morning with Dr. Will Mayo and saying that I had been up most of the night caring for a gravely-ill patient. Dr. Mayo, in his usually considerate manner, told me not to get the habit of worrying about loss of sleep. He said: "You know, Doctor, most of us worry too much about sleep. It used to vex me when I had a restless night, known that I had a difficult operation to perform in the morning. Gradually, I began to realise that if I would merely lie still without wasting my energy by twisting and turning, a few hours of sleep would refresh me."

Few men have carried the mental responsibilities that the Drs. Mayo carried. Surely, if these master surgeons,

with their many burdens, could acquire the art of repose, it should be simple for others who are less taxed mentally.

Turning to Mrs. Clydebotham's record, I noticed that my assistant had recorded the fact that she was an excessive coffee drinker, consuming from five to ten cups a day. Excess coffee drinking has proved to be such a constant cause of nervous symptoms among my patients that a routine question on every history sheet is: "How many cups of coffee do you consume each day?"

The Whip

"Did anyone ever speak to you about the stimulating effect of coffee?" I asked her.

"No, doctor, I don't recall anyone ever speaking to me about it, although I do remember Mrs. Reed telling me her doctor advised against it."

"Well, Mrs. Clydebotham, according to an analysis made by the Council of Pharmacy of the American Medical Association, an average cup of coffee contains about two grains of caffeine. Caffeine is a stimulating drug frequently used by the medical profession, especially in critical conditions such as pneumonia or shock. When you drink six cups of coffee a day, your system assimilates at least twelve grains of caffeine in that time. In fact, according to Dr. Bastedo, Professor of Pharmacology, whose figures are a little higher, you would probably be taking fourteen grains a day, whereas the average therapeutic dose is about seven grains. In other words, you are receiving two full therapeutic doses daily."

Then I told her that many of my patients scoff at the idea of coffee being harmful and a number of doctors

have laughingly said that they drank it with impunity before retiring. I have lived long enough, however, to see many people, including doctors, change their ideas about coffee. A cup of good coffee is enjoyable to drink, but it should be given up when it keeps one mentally alert late in the evening. Even an excellent sleeper may find that when under more or less constant drive and pressure all day, one cup of coffee at noon makes him very wakeful about bedtime. It is also recognised that an otherwise perfect stomach may be upset by coffee and develop gastric hyperacidity, and recent research attributes certain types of heart pain to this drug.

If a man is leading an active, outdoor life, such as that of a hunter, a ball player or a lumberjack, the effect of coffee is far less harmful. Moreover, some people develop a tolerance to coffee just as they do to morphine or any other drug. It is a well-known fact medically that if a person like herself were given merely one or two grains of morphine hypodermically, he would be in a precarious condition, while morphine addicts may take a hundred grains or more of the drug daily without serious immediate effect. Eventually, however, their health is completely undermined.

Furthermore, although coffee has less appreciable effect in young, healthy adults, it is particularly harmful to children and the middle-aged. As people approach mature life they no longer have the vigorous, healthy nervous system of youth. Young people in their twenties and thirties can tear madly here and there night after night, playing bridge many hours after a hard day at the office, can consume several cups of coffee and smoke countless cigarettes. Will they be able to keep up the pace? Many, now older, once thought they could, but

when they reached the forties or fifties, the services of numerous physicians were sought in an attempt to find out what ailed them. Of course, some say they prefer a brief, exciting life to a long, uneventful one, but the difficulty is that their lives will probably not be shortened, but only made unpleasant by ill health, nervousness, and the accompanying results and frustrations of fast living.

"But, doctor," queried my patient, "what has all this to do with the gas on my stomach? Do you really think coffee would cause that? I know a woman who drinks nearly as much coffee as I, but she doesn't complain of indigestion."

Not One But Many Causes

"My diagnosis, Mrs. Clydebotham, is this: Your suffering is the result of an accumulation of circumstances over a number of years. Coffee is a contributing cause. Had there been no depression and even if your husband had not lost his money, in all probability you would still be sick, although under different conditions. You would doubtless be occupying a suite of rooms at one of the luxurious health resorts which are scattered across the country to receive the idle rich. You burned the candle at both ends and insisted upon never extinguishing it. You were vigorous and young then and it never occurred to you that you would be unable to keep it up, but after a few years, you began to break. Now, I am not opposed to bridge; in fact, a quiet game with friends is excellent relaxation. Activities, too, indicate a healthy mind, but you attempted to carry on too many at one time. Now that your children have grown up and are able to take care of themselves, you ought to be in a position to lend

your mature judgment and valuable assistance to some of the organisations so badly in need of your help. But you can't do that until you take time out to build up your mental and physical tone.

Constipation As a Factor

"But you still haven't told me why I have gas on my stomach," she interrupted.

"No, and I probably cannot tell you exactly why you have gas on your stomach. An analysis of the stomach acids in your case showed a normal acidity. Probably your trouble is due to an excessive irritability of the nerves of your stomach, which stimulates the stomach muscles and interferes with the process of digestion. Coffee tends to increase this nerve tension. The use of soda may have afforded temporary relief, but is without permanent effect. Finally, since you indulge in no form of outdoor exercise, you have no appetite; consequently, the small amount of food you consume fails to promote proper peristalsis. The bowels become sluggish, and to tone them up, you resort to an artificial stimulus just as you have increased your tension with coffee. Your history shows that you began with an occasional dose of mineral oil, which probably became a daily habit, followed by enemas. Next, you became a bran addict; then you added an occasional dose of salts, after which you took cascara daily, and finally one patent medicine after another. Is it any wonder that your abused digestive tract should not occasionally rebel at such treatment and turn on the gas in protest?"

"Well, doctor, this constipation is a difficult condition to overcome. What am I to do about it?"

"Yes, you are right. When one allows his gastrointestinal tract to get into the condition yours is in, it cannot be speedily remedied by any cure-all. It will take weeks and possibly months of patient effort and re-education before the bad habits acquired in the past have been overcome, but if you will eat plenty of vegetables and fruit, drink from eight to ten glasses of water a day and walk from one to two miles a day, I feel quite certain that constipation will be overcome in time. In general, we eat an excess of cooked foods, while we should eat more green vegetables and raw fruits. Take a quarter of a pound each of dates, prunes, figs, and raisins; grind them in a food chopper and prepare them as a jam. A tablespoonful of this once or twice a day may keep the doctor away. Above all, be regular in the matter of a daily bowel movement."

Hygienic Living.

More than an hour had elapsed and I had scarcely begun to prescribe for Mrs. Clydebortham. She was asked to return the next afternoon, so that I might conclude the remarks I wished to make. Later in the day, I talked over her case with my associates. We all agreed that there are countless people in the world like Mrs. Clydebortham, many of whom could be benefited by nothing more unusual than good hygienic living, sunshine, fresh air, exercise, plenty of sleep and correct food. The problem is to find a way to make people want to try these things. There is no argument about there being plenty of sunshine and air right in their own gardens, but we agreed that a change of environment is also neces-

sary. Distant fresh air and sunshine would undoubtedly seem more desirable and beneficial. Then, too, one has to get away from the monotony of doing and seeing the same things day in and day out, month in and month out, year in and year out.

When Mrs. Clydebotham returns, I am determined to send her to the pine woods near where we go every summer, to see if that will cure the gas on her stomach. Surely, no one could spend a month or two vacationing in such a spot and still be troubled with nerves, insomnia, and innumerable other complaints. Perhaps the solution of her problem is to get her up there. She will think she cannot afford it, I said to myself, yet she has spent large sums of money on patent medicines, nurses, medical and non-medical bills. From her family's point of view, it would probably be cheap at any price, because in her present condition she is not only a burden to herself, but to her family as well.

Fortunately, Mrs. Clydebotham had already reached the point where she realised change of some kind was essential. She herself volunteered the suggestion that just escaping the monotonous routine of home life and the pampering of every complaint by an over-indulgent husband might have a beneficial effect. She was advised to return to her family doctor with a report of her case and certain accompanying suggestions.

She Found the Cure

Some time elapsed before she was heard from. Then one day early in September my secretary handed me the following letter:

My dear doctor:

We are now beginning our fifth week in the beautiful cherry-land country. Here on the inviting sand-beach of the lake and in the woods where the pines are thick and fragrant, I have grown healthy and strong. We have become great sun-worshippers, as you said we would, and for hours we play in the sand, and between times take a dip in the fresh, cool, invigorating water. If the noon-day sun is too warm, we retire to the cool shade of the log cabin and the pine woods for lunch and a brief rest, after which we go deep into the woods to cut down firewood or gather faggots. Soon, however, we are back on the beach again to absorb more of the health-giving ultra violet rays; by the end of vacation everyone will have a fine coat of tan, giving us the appearance of healthy Indians.

No one is troubled with insomnia here. At sundown, after we have built a glowing fire of coals on the beach, we broil either a thick, juicy steak or a fish, which is soon devoured by the hungry crowd. A poor appetite and gas on the stomach are unheard of up here. After dinner, everyone gathers driftwood and soon there is a big, roaring beach-fire, which sends the sparkling embers hurrying skyward. This is the signal to the other cottagers down the shore to gather for a song-feast; soon two dozen or more are seated around the fire supporting the leader in everything from the "Good Old Summertime", to the "Man on the Flying Trapeze". Without warning, a light streak appears on the horizon and everyone alertly watches for the first appearance of the harvest moon. Gradually the singing ceases and the embers lose their impetuous flame, for as we are all watching the brilliant reflection of the moon on the water every-

thing else is forgotten in its beauty. The soft, fragrant breeze from the pine woods and the sound of the rippling water casts a hypnotic spell over all. By and by someone yawns and stretches out full length on the sand, where several of the children are slumbering peacefully already.

As I lie there half-awake trying desperately to appear sociable, my mind wanders off to William Smith the high school principal you told me about, who lost thirty pounds last spring because of insomnia. Do send him to the woods, doctor. I think of myself as I used to be and of the unfortunate dwellers in the stuffy cities who rush around all day in the turmoil, noise and confusion, and then at night try to obtain a few hours of sleep. I sometimes wonder if man, with all his modern conveniences, his car, radio, electric lights and telephone, not to mention countless other luxuries, is really as well off today as the frontiersman.

We have none of these so-called luxuries in camp; but candles and oil-lamps are a treat after glaring lamps which invite you to stay up all hours of the night. Nor is there a radio, to blare out jazz music when our tired nerves need peace and rest.

In short, doctor, we are sold on this spot, which you recommended and the life you prescribed, and we are very grateful to you.

Your devoted patient,
CYNTHIA CLYDEBOTHAM.

P.S. We have bought some property and next year we shall have a cabin of our own. I intend never again to be bothered or to bother you with gas on my stomach.

CHAPTER VIII

CHANGE OF LIFE FOR THE BETTER

Needless Suffering

PROBABLY the most frequent condition for which women consult a physician is the menopause, but there are still too many women who do not have the services of a physician at this time. This is unfortunate, because much unnecessary discomfort and emotional distress is endured. Medical science has achieved remarkable success in the alleviation of the numerous annoying symptoms that may accompany the change of life. While it is true that some women suffer very little distress at this period, the majority complain of many symptoms, so many and varied in fact that they are difficult to enumerate. It is true that most of these complaints are trivial, but a patient suffering from severe headaches, hot flashes and dizzy spells, is as miserable as an ulcer, gall-bladder or pneumonia case and as much in need of treatment.

A Normal Transition

It is well to consider first of all that menopause is a period of normal transition in every woman's life and that mothers, grandmothers, and ancestors way back before history began endured this period successfully and without the help of modern therapeutics. This is a period in every woman's life when she will need to put forth a little extra effort to radiate happiness and

sunshine. If there is a tendency to depression and melancholia, pleasant diversion such as the theatre, the company of jolly friends, or healthy recreation should be sought. Emotional upsets over trivial family affairs should be guarded against. Unfortunately, too few husbands realise just what the menopause is and refuse to make allowances for these few years that call for an unusual amount of tact and sympathy. On the part of many husbands this is a matter of ignorance rather than a failure to co-operate. Yet this very lack of understanding is what brings many an unhappy couple to the divorce courts. In medicine, prevention is always preferable to cure when it can be simply and successfully accomplished. One way to reduce the appalling number of cases going to divorce courts will be to educate young married couples about some of the normal problems of life that they must face. Priests, ministers, judges, social workers and physicians are all helping society to ride the ups and downs in our present roller-coaster civilisation. Life is just one bump after another and those who really enjoy living are the ones who learn to take these bumps successfully. We must find our sunshine by giving it to others and making those about us happy.

Don't Take It Too Seriously

When a woman in the late forties whose hair is just becoming tinged with grey, becomes suspicious of her husband and feels that perhaps he is "stepping out" she had best consult her minister and her physician before her lawyer. Perhaps as a result of the menopause her cheerful, friendly sympathetic manner has changed to a gloomy, cold, unstable one. Perhaps she "flies off the

handle" at the least provocation and takes it out on the children or her husband. Or maybe she just sits around and bemoans her lot and permits herself frequent crying spells, especially when the children return tired from school, or the husband from a hard day's work. Perhaps she takes to her bed for days at a time because of sick headaches, so that her housework is undone and the usual family routine upset. If her husband has put in a long day at the office, in the factory, store or field, he is in no mood for cold left-overs and an untidy home. Add to that an unkempt wife with a tendency to scold and unburden all her troubles and is it any wonder that some men leave home?

Co-operation of the Husband

All of this is entirely unnecessary. To begin with every husband should know in advance that for one or more years his wife will undergo one of the most trying periods of her life. As a rule, menopause comes to most women in their late forties, in some, due to abnormal disturbances of the ovaries, it may come even in the twenties or thirties, in a few it occurs as late as fifty-five. Probably an average age is forty-seven. The husband as well as the wife should prepare for this time. He must be ready to make allowances for more than the ordinary periods of emotional upsets and physical ailments. As a rule, it is the wife who radiates sunshine, sympathy, and consolation when her husband loses his job, takes a cut in salary, or finds his business problems seemingly insurmountable. The poor boys who became railway presidents, the farm lads who sky-rocketed to the head of great utility organisations, countless famous

men should give credit to their wives for encouraging and aiding them, particularly during periods of discouragement and failure. Too often the important part that she plays in these success dramas is overlooked. Nor can the helpful part a wife has played always be determined by her husband's financial status and social position. Often more happy than his rich employer is the labourer, the tenant, or the butler in his simple but cheerful home life developed with his wife's help through many years of hardship and toil.

So then if the husband can but realise that menopause is the time for him to bring happiness into the home; if he can but shoulder a few more of the family burdens and make due allowances for shortcomings on the part of his wife, the usual routine of the home need not be disturbed. If at all possible, he should provide extra help in the home. Provision should be made for frequent changes of scenery to break the monotony of the wife's life. That does not mean, as some take it to mean, that she need take numerous and expensive jaunts about the country. Rather there should be short trips to the city for country folk and vice versa. For city people there should be an abundance of good, healthy exercise, such as picnics with hikes in the woods or mountains, golf, tennis, canoeing, sailing, fishing, ski-ing, skating and hunting. People such as farm women who normally enjoy good outdoor exercise need a different type of change, a motor trip, or a boat trip on the ocean, or a visit to a near-by city, visiting stores, parks, theatres and museums.

The Symptoms

What about the symptoms of change of life? Most

frequent is the complaint of hot flushes accompanied by nervous tension that may manifest itself in numerous forms. Most annoying are the headaches and dizzy spells. Most serious is the tendency on the part of some women to develop high blood pressure. Most unnecessary are the emotional upsets and lack of self-control with spells of despondency and even thoughts of suicide. Most humiliating is the tendency of some to gain weight and lose their figures. Most important to guard against are the occasional instances where some pathological changes occur in the reproductive system, such as cancer of the breast, uterus or ovaries, or toxic goitre, or abnormalities of the nervous system.

It would be difficult to list the entire number of petty disturbances that may be experienced by some women during this period. There are some physicians who either do not understand what the menopause is or who refuse to recognise it. It is their contention that this is a perfectly normal process and that the less said about it the better. To discuss it or even recognise it other than as a normal process is only to magnify it in the patient's mind. To them any self-possessed woman should have no complaints. With this contention I most heartily disagree. During twenty years I have seen too many women bravely but needlessly enduring the symptoms of menopause. Women who have endured the most severe headaches to the point of exhaustion for days are relieved in a manner no less spectacular, no less beneficial than the relief of diabetic coma by insulin, of dehydration and acidosis by the use of glucose intravenously. One patient was sufficiently ill to have been diagnosed as having intestinal obstruction and yet gained complete relief of symptoms by the use of ovarian therapy.

Correct Therapy

Every physician today is acquainted with the beneficial effects to be attained from ovarian therapy, and no women need suffer the distressing symptoms of menopause. True, there is seldom a complete cessation, particularly of the many trivial complaints such as numbness in the fingers or toes, or burning sensations, or gastrointestinal disturbances, but the exercise of will-power can to a large extent minimise these. Also it is true that some ovarian preparations are far more effective than others, and those given in the vein have, in our experience, proved more beneficial than those administered by mouth or intramuscularly. Much research is being done along this line and new and better preparations are rapidly being developed for use of the medical profession. At present there is no specific preparation, some persons responding to one type more effectively than to others.

As a rule, the heat-waves, hot and cold feelings, hot flushes and profuse sweating spells can be controlled so as to cause little discomfort. In some they can be eliminated. Many women are fortunate in experiencing little discomfort from these symptoms. A woman may suffer an occasional headache for years, but at the approach of the menopause these headaches may become not only more frequent but far more severe. Proper therapy will frequently relieve the headaches entirely or cause them greatly to diminish in frequency and severity. Dizzy spells respond equally well to treatment.

The Romance of the Internal Glands

The real romance of medicine is wrapped up in the

internal glands, the parathyroids, the thyroid, the pituitary, the adrenals, the thymus, the ovaries, and the testis and the discoveries to be made in this special field before the twenty-first century undoubtedly will rival those of Pasteur and other great scientists of the past century. Already, investigators have prepared a substance from the urine of pregnant women which has produced striking clinical results. For example, in women suffering from an excessive menstrual flow, this substance has checked and regulated menstruation, while in the opposite condition, it has activated menstruation and caused a normal flow. Still more remarkable, when this substance is injected into male children because of a failure of a testicle to descend to its normal location, it will, in some instances, correct this congenital abnormality and thus obviate a surgical operation.

Although neither sufficient time has elapsed nor has a large enough number of cases been reported to verify definite conclusions regarding these more recent developments in the field of endocrinology, actual verification together with even more brilliant therapeutic effects are to be expected.

High Blood Pressure

It is my impression from observation of a group of patients over a period of fifteen years that a definite tendency to elevation of the blood pressure comes about at the menopause as a result of disturbances in the internal glands. The actual cause of high blood pressure remains unknown; the present concept is that there are many causes. Infection from the teeth, tonsils, gall-bladder, kidney or some other foci may be a cause. Toxic nodular goitre is nearly always accompanied by high blood

pressure. The sympathetic nervous system has been considered a factor in some cases. Nerve tension or anything that tends to increase it such as caffeine may play a part, perhaps nicotine is concerned. Obesity seems to be responsible in some persons. Whatever the cause or causes, it is well to guard against hypertension and prevent it when possible. While our knowledge of the internal glands is slowly increasing, their numerous functions are so complex that we have but a bird's eye view, so to speak, of these remarkable governors of the body. They do appear to be closely related in their functions and not infrequently when one gland is disturbed, others may be likewise affected. This being so, it is reasonable to conjecture that with the ovaries undergoing a change at the menopause, possibly the pituitary, the thyroid, and the adrenal glands are also influenced. Very probably one or all of these glands have an important influence on the blood pressure. Women who receive ovarian therapy either before or early in menopause seldom develop high blood pressure during that period. Those who go to a physician only after the symptoms are well advanced frequently do have an elevation of the blood pressure usually of recent occurrence. Even when hypertension has developed, ovarian therapy, sedatives, and proper regulation by a physician may prove beneficial.

The tendency to be highly strung, nervy, emotional, and easily upset is, to a considerable extent, helped by ovarian therapy. A self-imposed self-control, an air of assurance, confidence, and fortitude will go a long way to tide over this time. Inability to sleep may be controlled by the avoidance of all stimulants and the use of mild sedatives under the direction of a physician.

Palpitation of the heart may be annoying, but is seldom serious unless accompanied by a loss of weight. If this occurs a physician should be consulted without delay. He, too, can advise as to the proper diet or therapy essential if there is a tendency to gain weight excessively.

Normal Menopause

What women wish to know most of all is how long will the menopause last. There is no answer to that question, since no two women are alike. Some women experience but few if any symptoms, in others symptoms may last a year; in some, mild symptoms may persist for as long as ten years. Probably in a normal average menopause, one might experience mild symptoms such as an increased nervous tension and an occasional hot flush as early as forty-five, an intensifying of the symptoms at forty-eight or nine, together with a marked irregularity of the menstrual periods, and a cessation of all but an occasional symptom at fifty. This does not mean that on the average symptoms are present for five years. On the contrary, most women seldom experience much discomfort except for a period of about a year.

Abnormal Menstruation

Most important of all is for a woman to understand when and when not to be concerned about abnormal menstruation. These are facts that every school-girl should know—but unfortunately they don't—otherwise surgeons would still not be confronted every day with cases of hopelessly advanced cancer of the uterus.

Considering the normal menstrual cycle to be a period of four days occurring approximately every twenty-eight, and conceding that most women deviate from this cycle either at times or always, it is important to remember this fact: That when approaching or during the menopause, the periods may become either scant or excessive, there may occur weeks or months between periods, but that any irregular flow, especially spotting between periods, is important and calls for an immediate examination by a competent physician. If this spotting or flowing persists, request an examination by a specialist. A foul discharge may likewise be a danger symptom of cancer. There is no need for any nervy woman undergoing the menopause to develop a cancer phobia from these remarks, but far better that half a dozen should do so than that one should die unnecessarily from cancer.

Guard Against Cancer

Excessive flowing may or may not be important; it may be due to a fibroid tumour. This is nearly always a benign condition, but may from its very size cause symptoms because it presses on adjacent organs, the bladder and rectum. It may also cause anaemia. Small tumours are occasionally treated by X-rays or radium, but surgical removal is usually preferable. An excessive menstrual flow may be due to change in the body of the uterus, hypertrophic endometritis, and if unchecked, the patient may develop a severe anaemia requiring blood transfusions before any other treatment. For this condition and to eliminate the possibility of cancer in the body of the uterus, most surgeons perform a diagnostic curettage of the uterus, which is followed by radium treat-

ments. Radium, through its action on the reproductive organs, brings about an immediate cessation of the menstrual flow and hastens the menopause. At the same time it acts to destroy a cancer if one is present. If such be the case, most surgeons feel it advisable to remove all the reproductive organs shortly thereafter. If the cancer is in the cervix or neck of the uterus, it is frequently treated by deep X-ray therapy and radium rather than surgery. A diagnostic curettage, scraping of the womb, followed by the use of radium is but a comparatively simple procedure for a competent surgeon, it requires only a few days hospitalisation, and is often the means of preventing or checking a serious condition.

There is one more point regarding menopause and abnormal menstrual flow that is important. Any spotting or flowing that occurs after menstruation has ceased may be very important and a physician should be consulted regarding this immediately. By way of illustration, a woman has ceased to menstruate at fifty, but three years later she notices an occasional spotting. It is appalling that although many women know Latin or how to sew a dress or bake a cake, they do not realise the importance of this symptom, which may vitally affect life and happiness.

No woman need fear the menopause. With the proper understanding of what she may expect, with the right mental attitude, with the help and co-operation of her family, and with advice and treatment by her physician, the problem is greatly simplified. A deep religious experience at this time will strengthen her moral and spiritual courage and will enable her to look cheerfully forward to the happiest and healthiest time of her life—the serene fifties and sixties.

Artificial Menopause

It is distressing but sometimes essential that young women must undergo operations for the removal of large cysts or malignant growths that may result in the loss of the ovaries. As a result a condition of artificial menopause occurs and symptoms that normally might last but a year or two may persist for five, ten, or fifteen years. Unless these symptoms of menopause are combatted by proper ovarian therapy as well as mental therapy, there is a tendency for the patient to become nervous, neurotic and occasionally obese.

CASE HISTORY: Mrs. K. R., forty-nine years of age, came in with the following complaints: Weakness, choking spells, dizziness and pains in the arms and legs.

"At times," she said, "my stomach feels as if I am rocking in a boat." While she has this sensation, there is a blurring of the eyes. She had been unable to sleep, had a poor appetite, and had been losing weight. From her previous history, I learned that she had undergone operations for haemorrhoids, tonsils, appendicitis and for the removal of her ovaries and tubes. Following this last operation, she had been in poor health, and one year ago she had suffered a nervous breakdown. At that time she had become, in her own words, "very ill". She had had spells of weakness, choking, and numbness along with shortness of breath, and she was unable to talk distinctly for many months. Then she was removed to a hospital where she had spent considerable time and money being treated for anaemia. Finally her condition became so severe that she was unable to walk, and when she had recovered enough strength to walk, she fell and sprained

her ankle because of her weakness. After this she entered a sanitorium for nerve patients, where her condition improved, but when she was discharged, it was necessary for her to be under the care of a nurse for six months. In a further attempt to regain her health, she was given hydro-therapy in another institution.

In reviewing this patient's history, it was evident that she was in comparatively good health until she underwent an operation for the removal of the ovaries, which brought about a condition known as artificial menopause with its unfortunate results. Many of these nervous symptoms, however, could have been prevented if the operation had been followed up with ovarian gland therapy. Patients given this treatment show the same remarkable improvement as do those lacking in thyroid when given thyroid gland therapy. It is essential, however, that treatment be continuous and kept up until an age when the patient would normally have passed through the menopause. It was evident in this case that treatment for anaemia availed little, and upon physical examination, it was found that this patient had no organic disease; her blood count was normal and her urinalysis was negative.

A diagnosis of artificial menopause was made and most of the symptoms from which she was suffering were attributed to this condition. The response to treatment long delayed, however, is not as satisfactory as to treatment started immediately following operation.

This woman was advised to lead an outdoor life, to avoid any mental or physical strain which would increase her nervous tension, and to learn to adjust her mental reactions and emotions to the situation confronting her; she was also given ovarian treatment and sedatives. With-

in a short time she had shown a satisfactory response to treatment and there was every indication that she might expect further benefit by continuing it.

CASE HISTORY: A similar history was that of Miss S. M., thirty-six years of age, who gave as her chief complaints exhaustion and nerviness for a period of three years. She had numerous other complaints such as migraine headaches, tremor of the hands, a sour stomach with regurgitation of food and periodic sick spells with which she suffered some pressure in the left side of her head.

From her past history, it was learned that she had undergone numerous operations, the last one having been for the removal of her pelvic organs. She stated that several years ago she became nervous and suffered from twitching of the extremities which became so annoying that it was necessary for her to stop work and remain home for some weeks. Finally she resumed her work, but since that time she had never been well.

Five years ago the same symptoms became more pronounced. In the hope of obtaining relief, she had submitted to an operation for removal of the pelvic organs, but complications set in and it wasn't until six months later that she felt better. After a short period of improvement, she began to suffer from headaches, insomnia, nervousness, and loss of weight. For a short time she took ovarian treatment with improvement, but last summer all her symptoms became aggravated and were climaxed by another spell of extreme exhaustion. She stated that since her operation, she had lost forty pounds. She had taken many strong sedatives to help her sleep.

The physical examination of this patient was negative; her blood pressure and basal metabolic rate were normal,

as were all other laboratory examinations. The diagnosis was chronic nervous exhaustion, artificial menopause and too much surgery. This patient was also advised to lead an outdoor life, to avoid mental and physical strain which would increase her nervous tension, and to relax. She was given ovarian treatment and mild sedatives.

When she returned a short time later, she had begun to gain weight, was more optimistic and seemed on the road to regaining her health. Patients suffering from these conditions can hardly expect to be restored to their normal vigour, but they can be given considerable relief from these distressing conditions provided they co-operate with their physician and carry out the programme suggested for the treatment of these cases.

While menopause is one of the most frequent causes of nerviness in middle-aged women, it is a condition easily remedied by the family physician through the proper use of ovarian therapy, mild sedatives, and assurance. Another frequent cause for nerviness in both men and women of middle-age is the strain of too many activities, committees, chairmanships, boards of directors, and presidencies of this and that. Menopause cannot be blamed for this type of thing.

CHAPTER IX

BALANCED LIVING

Some Common Worries

WORRY is the basis of many nervous breakdowns. It is a mistake to resist worry. By attempting to overcome it, the worry becomes magnified many times. The strain of the effort makes it increasingly more difficult to drop the strain of worry. To quiet the nerves by relaxing the muscles is the better way. The worry will then take care of itself.

What do people worry about?

They worry for fear they have heart trouble. Their hearts beat fast. The more they think of it and are afraid, the more they are bothered with nervous palpitation of the heart.

Many people have a fear of cancer. That is something to be afraid of, but unfortunately those who get cancer are unaware of it for some time and usually have never been concerned about the possibility of developing a malignant condition.

It is strange that neurotic people continually worry about their health while sick people are seldom concerned enough. Consequently, if your physician has assured you that you are not suffering from any organic disease, have confidence in him. Relax. Then study your own case and determine, if possible, the cause of your nervous tension. It may not seem like nervousness to you. You may feel sure that you have rheumatism, heart trouble, stomach trouble or some of the other diseases in which

nervous tension masquerades. Ignore these symptoms and look to your nerves for the cause of your pain. If one or both of your parents were nervy and highly strung, you have the possible factors of heredity and early environment to overcome; but with the proper philosophy this will not be difficult.

Many people worry about national and world conditions. After what we have been through the past twenty-five years, it is a wonder that more are not similarly afflicted. A series of catastrophes began with World War I. In the waning days of that war came the most devastating plagues this country has ever known, the great influenza epidemics of 1918 and 1921. There were few homes in which these plagues did not strike, causing either the death of some loved one or the dread that this might occur. A comparatively mild financial depression in 1921 was followed by a period of frenzied finance, excessive drinking, spending, gambling and other forms of irrational living climaxed by the overwhelming crash of 1929. Then came the most serious financial depression the country ever experienced, and just as we began to recover from this the world was plunged into another war.

Taxes have reached a point where it is a severe strain for many men to pay them, and the whole world is in a turmoil. The result of all this is that nerves seem to have reached the breaking-point. It avails us nothing to worry about these conditions. If we could return to this little planet of ours a hundred, five hundred years hence, we should probably find people still having the same troubles, just as they had them in the days of Columbus. Each one probably thought that there had never before been such crucial times. But just as most of our ancestors lived

through the Black Death, the Indian mutinies, and many other critical periods in history, most of us will survive the present trying times.

Courage Is Essential

Why, then, should any individual become discouraged and beaten in the struggle of life when history is replete with examples of men rallying in the face of great odds and overcoming all obstacles? Often we read in the newspapers of someone who, finding life's problems insurmountable, has taken the easiest way out. These people should have been taken to a crippled children's hospital to see how these patient little sufferers derive pleasure from life in spite of their handicaps. Or, surely a visit to a hospital to see patients suffering with incurable diseases, such as cancer or advanced tuberculosis, would help to cure melancholia and self-pity.

What else do people worry about? They worry about the future. Most of us live too much in the future. We should cease our continuous worry about tomorrow and let it take care of itself. After all, the worst that can happen to any of us is death; and from my experience with it, it is rather quiet and peaceful except for those left behind.

I can recall sitting in a family circle with several sons and daughters and their dying father. The mother had passed away some years before and the very devoted husband was actually looking forward to the time when he would be able to join his loving wife. The family talked about this reunion just as if the father were contemplating a long journey, one which in time they would all anticipate taking themselves so they might again be re-

united. There was no sign of unhappiness. On the contrary, there was a sort of God-speed-you-on-your-journey feeling. Each one in turn embraced the father, who smiled a parting adieu, closed his eyes and quietly slipped away.

I have seen many patients pass away under equally tranquil circumstances. It is seldom that patients are permitted anything but a peaceful death. Not long ago I had the satisfaction of attending an old teacher and friend during his last few hours. He was a physician who had attained international reputation in his particular field. Also with him were his wife and another physician friend.

Although the sick man's mind remained quite clear, his sight gradually failed. But it gave him a sense of comfort to be able to hold our hands and know that we were near him. There existed an unusually close bond between him and his wife, who for many years had assisted him in his work. It was her philosophy that although it was not easy to part, she was grateful for the years of work and comradeship which they had had together.

Hour after hour she sat beside his bed refusing to leave the room even for a minute for fear she might not be present at his departing. From time to time he softly conversed with his wife about their work, sleeping quietly between times. Gradually his breathing grew quieter and death came about so peacefully that it was scarcely perceptible.

Govern Your Emotions

Even death is not a cause for worry. And yet there

are people who worry and get upset about nothing at all. It is splendid to appreciate so fully the great and lasting values of life that the trivial events of the day cannot disturb you. A mistake at bridge, water spilled at the table, an argument are all trivial events, and yet:

There was a woman who worried herself into a sick headache because she made a mis-play at bridge.

There was a man who became so upset when his little girl knocked over a glass of water at the dinner-table that he choked to death on a piece of beefsteak.

There was John Hunter, the father of surgery, who died of a heart attack brought on when he lost his temper in an argument.

When one is tired as the result of tension or fatigue, emotional reactions, which otherwise might amount to nothing, will be magnified many times. Many tired, nervy housewives would become less tired and nervy if they would make a conscientious effort to change their scheme of housekeeping, abandoning unnecessary articles of furnishings and planning a systematic schedule of shopping, meals and housework.

Adjust Yourself to Your Work

Sometimes the type of work a person is doing does not suit him and therefore causes him to be nervy and unable to sleep for thinking about it. If it is impossible for him to adjust himself to his working conditions through proper relaxation and balanced living, he should look around for a different position. However, a person should not overlook the fact that it is almost impossible to find the ideal job. When one works with other people, disturbing conflicts and arguments are sure to arise. One

should try not to take one's work and what other people say and do too seriously, and to forget about them as soon as the working day is done. It is best never to carry a grudge over to the next day, as anger and its attending bitter feeling can do more to destroy peace of mind than anything else, and an uneasy mind is a prey for nervousness. Persons who are under a severe strain should try to retire at a reasonable hour, that is, 10 or 10.30 o'clock. When they feel they are becoming tense they should retire even earlier for several nights.

Some school-teachers have voices which mount the scale of shrillness and force in proportion to the increase in their nervous fatigue. Often a true enthusiasm is obscured in a sharp loud voice. It would be more impressive in its power with the pupils if it were kept quiet. We are all sensitive to the shrill, unpleasant tones characteristic of many highly strung, nervy persons. Likewise, in the tenseness of an argument, the voice rises. The best way to govern the temper is to modulate the voice. The nervous system and the voice are in such exquisite sympathy that they constantly act and react upon each other. It is essential that nervous persons cultivate a quiet, well-modulated voice.

Think of Others

It is advisable for nervy people to shift their thoughts from themselves to others. One middle-aged woman undertook to bring happiness into the lives of an elderly couple who lived near her. She took them for frequent rides in her automobile and lavished upon them flowers from her garden and delicacies from her table. An office worker made it a habit to buy a pencil a week from the

cripple who sat outside his office building, not to help the cripple so much as to help himself. Making little children happy brings great satisfaction to some people, and many nervy women have brought peace and joy into their lives by adopting children.

Sometimes a mother has nursed her baby too long, with a resulting nervous breakdown. One's personal physician can advise best about this, but certainly nine months should be the limit. Supplementary feedings are usually started during the first few months.

A Day at a Time

I ask many of my patients to try to live each day as it comes and to resolve each morning that they will try to get the best out of that day. If we start out each day by seeing how many people we can make happy and how much good we can do for others, our own problems will soon fade into oblivion.

According to Carlyle:

“Our main business is not to see what lies dimly at a distance, but to do that what lies clearly at hand.”

People live too often in the past or in the future. They scarcely forget about the problems of yesterday which at the time seemed insurmountable, before concerning themselves with the uncertainties of tomorrow. Let us be more interested in the events of each day.

“What each day needs that shalt thou ask
Each day will set its own task.” Goethe.

For the short time we are on this earth, let us develop a spirit of optimism, of hope and good cheer. Among your friends and acquaintances, who is the best liked, always welcome, always popular? Isn't it the one who radiates joy, good health, and encouragement? He is the pillar for the rest to lean on with their nervous worries, aches and pains and discouragements.

Start the Week Right

One should begin the week by making Sunday a day of rest and relaxation; do not make a habit of doing the left over jobs of the week. Start the day by having breakfast attractively served with the family. Go to church. An hour once a week in a place of worship can be uplifting and inspiring. It should carry the mind beyond and above thoughts of self. Afterwards take a picnic dinner and enjoy a sun-bath and a walk, if the weather permits; in the winter there are ponds, rivers, and lakes where ice-skating can be enjoyed, and hills for ski-ing, sledding, and tobogganning. Try some of these things and you will agree that you have a different outlook on life Monday morning.

During the week when you reach home tired after a hard day and your nerves are on edge, do you ever try changing into comfortable clothes? Substituting old shoes for tight-fitting ones, and removing ties and belts afford comfort and relaxation. One of the beneficial things about a summer camp is that one can wear an old worn-out pair of shoes without laces, socks without garters, omit collars, ties, and even shirts, and wear trousers without a belt or braces. This frees the nervous system from several irritating annoyances.

Some persons are under a nervous tension because their shoes do not fit properly and they can, therefore, neither stand nor walk without discomfort; consequently, all kinds of imaginary bodily ills have been relieved by a self-styled Canadian foot specialist, a good shoe-fitter with a clever understanding of the weakness of the human race.

When you have had a hard day, take a warm bath, use your favourite bath-salts if you are a woman and lie in the tub until you feel relaxed; steam your face, and then use either an astringent or cold water; put on an attractive pair of lounging pyjamas, and assume the attitude of a man or woman of leisure. Rest for half an hour either by lying down with your eyes closed, allowing only pleasant thoughts to penetrate your mind, or spend the time in company with an interesting book or newspaper. The effect is amazing! You will feel rejuvenated. Your family as well as yourself will benefit by the procedure.

Mental versus Physical

After a hard day of mental work, do you ever try some physical work like digging weeds? Although I have been working on this book only a few hours today, I find my nerves and muscles tense and strained. Consequently, I am now going to join the boys for a few rounds of basket-ball to loosen up my muscles. Regardless of your type of occupation, if you are required constantly to use the same set of muscles every day, devote at least some time to using other muscles. It is especially important for persons who sit for long hours at desk work or typewriter to seek recreation in some form of vigorous

exercise if nothing more than a brisk walk in a nearby park or a pleasant street.

Some women cannot understand how they develop a case of nerves by merely sewing. They will sit for hours in a cramped position needlessly tightening many groups of muscles in the neck, back, and legs. They may even bring on fatigue by the cramped, strained position of the lungs; this can be prevented by assuming a comfortable position of relaxation, by resting from time to time, and by taking occasional long, deep breaths. Anyone inclined to be nervy should not sew for long periods of time. In fact, it would be better to give up sewing entirely and spend that time in the open air.

Those whose occupations require them to do considerable writing or typing are subjected to the same nervous tension and fatigue. This is due to assuming cramped positions of the lungs or muscles. Almost any moderately nervy person will grasp his pen or pencil as if some unseen force were trying to pull it away, and write with a firmly-set jaw, and a powerful tension of the muscles of the neck, back, or even the legs. In order to prevent writers' paralysis he should stop at frequent intervals and relax the back, legs and mind as well as stretch the muscles of the hand, then go on writing in this relaxed state.

Relax to Pain

A word about nerves and pain. Did you ever try relaxing to a pain? It is difficult to do. When you go to the dentist and see the drill being prepared, your natural tendency is either to grip the sides of the chair tightly, or clasp your hands together and kev up every nerve in your body to withstand the pain. Figure it out for your-

self; you are only adding to your troubles. The more the nerves are strained to bear pain, the more sensitive they become. The ones affected first feel most keenly the increased pain. Reverse that action, let go, and by decreasing the nervous tension, the pain is decreased. Most of the nervous fatigue suffered from the dentist's work is in consequence of the unnecessary strain of expecting a hurt, and not from any actual pain inflicted. The effect of fright is nervous strain, which again contracts the muscles.

Thus it is that nervy, high-strung city people seldom stand pain as well as their more relaxed, easy-going country cousins. When a person has a severe case of nerves, he is plagued by many petty annoyances that the average person would laugh at and forget. An ache or a pain here and there is magnified many times for the high tension, nervy person. When that person learns how to relax, his aches and pains will lessen and disappear.

Monotonous Lives

Speaking about country people reminds me that many have become so accustomed to their seclusion that any suggestion concerning a trip to visit a relative or friend in the city is met only with fear and uncertainty. If you are tense, because you live on a lonely farm where tasks are arduous and monotonous and your life rather dull, purchase a radio, order some magazines, and go to a movie occasionally. Avoid the habit of thinking and talking about your ailments. Seek mental diversion such as books, music, theatre and art. Cultivate hobbies such as wood-carving, pottery, metal work, drawing, weaving and carpentry.

A change to break up the monotony of a routine is necessary to everyone. If you live in a city take up such courses as public speaking and current events. Join a local dramatic club, a debating society, a neighbourhood club, the Y.M.C.A. for companionship and social gatherings. Study nature, birds, shells, butterflies, stamps, mushrooms, flowers, autographs, antiques, interior decorating, hooking-rugs, needlework, philanthropy, horses, dogs, in fact, anything to take your mind off yourself and give you a broader, fuller and more interesting life. If you wish to meet new friends, join a men's or a women's club, the Masons, or other clubs which strike your fancy. I know a janitor who belongs to a stamp club, and a painter who is a woodman. I know a farmer who is a member of a town club and a salesman who directs a drum and bugle corps.

If your nerves are tired and tense because the speed, clamour, and roar of the city have got the better of you, go to the country. If it is impossible to leave home, cultivate a garden. How gardening has helped, always, to calm and benefit certain natures is quaintly stated in the following words taken from the unpublished memoirs of a country physician, a lovable man, who practised medicine about the middle of the last century.

"Of all the pursuits which occupy the mind of man, none is more interesting, more inspiring, or satisfying than that of gardening. . . . There is little in the garden to excite our evil passions. . . . Gardening is an occupation pre-eminently calculated to subdue the evil tendencies in our nature.

"The man who digs his own garden seldom digs his own grave. He who has a taste for floriculture or for horticulture, and who devotes his leisure hours to those

pursuits, has seldom any very great vices to undermine his health, or his life.

"The love of gardens, the love of fields, and of flowers, has been sung by almost every poet of every age, from Homer, the majestic, to Bloomfield, the lowly; nor have philosophers, statesmen, and physicians been less devoted in their praise. The great and wise Sir Francis Bacon taught the art of gardening, and the good and noble Sir Thomas Moore taught his children to love all created things, but particularly the flowers of the garden. Nor is Galen, one of the early fathers of medicine, less earnest when he says: 'He who has two cakes of bread, let him sell one and buy some flowers; for bread is food for the body, but flowers are food for the soul'. . . .

"I walk into my garden, and there read a lesson that teaches me humanity . . . my relationship to all men. I see that all men, not the Caucasian alone, but all races alike, that all nations have contributed to my comfort and my convenience. All nations are there represented. I am on every hand indebted for the flowers which charm the eye, or the fruits which gratify the palate, to all people, to Europe, Asia, and Africa, or to the western hemisphere. . . .

"The influences of a garden are a thousandfold. It is, or perhaps ought to be, our own creation, if we are to gather from it all the pleasure that it is capable of giving.

'All that hurts,
My garden spade can heal. A woodland walk,
A quest of river vines, a mocking thrush,
A wild rose, or rock-loving columbine
Salve my worst wounds.' "



"It is essential that food is properly digested amid pleasant surroundings in cheerful company. Undue emotional strain such as excitement, anger, or grief nearly always disturbs digestion."

Illness and Nerves

Physicians know that persons of nervous temperament and those who are high-strung and tense are frequently subject to two commonly associated ailments, stomach ulcer and hyperacidity. If the stomach conditions improve, the patient begins to relax. Sometimes it happens the other way around. If the patient can learn to relax, the stomach symptoms improve. The essentials in the treatment of nervous hyperacidity are frequent meals of light, easily-digested food, particularly milk, the avoidance of fried, greasy, rich food and large infrequent meals. If the stomach is empty too long, the patient becomes tense and nervy. It is advisable for everyone to practice moderation in eating, and if he is inclined to be nervy, to avoid either a too empty or a too full stomach. It is likewise essential that food be digested properly amid pleasant surroundings in cheerful company. Extreme fatigue or undue strain such as excitement, anger, or grief, will disturb digestion.

Sometimes insomnia is a common sequel of the inability to relax properly, but those engaged in hard physical labour are seldom thus troubled. The moral is obvious. Here is an opportunity to indulge in your favourite active sport, be it surf-board riding or pitching quoits. There is no objection to treating insomnia by taking a mild sedative temporarily under the direction of a physician, but long continued use of strong drugs is to be condemned.

Study the lives of some important men of affairs. Take President Roosevelt, for example; he relaxed perfectly, in spite of the tremendous burden he shouldered, as great a burden, perhaps, as any man has ever carried

over a similar period. When he went on a sailing cruise, which he frequently did, he wore old comfortable clothes and didn't shave for days.

Theodore Roosevelt was also an artist at alternating hard work and relaxation. While living in the White House, he used to organise follow-the-leader hikes. Ambassadors, army officers, and other prominent people took part.

"To be invited by the President to go on one of those hikes was regarded as a mark of special favour," says William Roscoe Thayer in his biography of Theodore Roosevelt.

Mr. Thayer tells about the time M. Jusserand, the French Ambassador was asked to accompany the president on an afternoon walk. M. Jusserand arrived at the White House in afternoon dress and silk hat. To his surprise the President appeared in a tramping-suit and knickerbockers, thick boots and soft felt hat, much worn. The small party of men started off at breakneck speed and were soon out of the city. On reaching the country the President went pell-mell over the fields, following neither road nor path, but hurrying straight ahead. The ambassador was soon out of breath, although refusing to admit it. He sighed with relief when at last they came to the bank of a stream, rather wide and too deep to be forded. He thought they had reached their goal and would stop for a rest before turning homeward, but he was amazed and horrified to see the President unbutton his clothes and say: "We'd better strip, so as not to wet our things in the creek."

The ambassador, for the honour of France, he afterward insisted, removed his apparel, everything except his lavender kid gloves. When the President cast an inquir-

ing look at these as if they, too, must come off, M. Jusser-and forestalled any further remark on the President's part by saying: "With your permission, Mr. President, I will keep these on, otherwise it would be embarrassing if we should meet ladies." Then he jumped into the water with the others and swam across.

Isn't it the art of balanced living, hard work offset by easy play, mental effort relieved by muscular exercise, nervous strains and tensions eased by poised quiet, or even languorous occupations, that gives certain persons the power to drive ahead and succeed at difficult tasks without breaking in health or spirit?



CHAPTER X

RELIGION AND NERVES

Introduction

EVERY physician appreciates the value of faith in healing the sick. It is a well-known fact that if a patient makes up his mind he will not get well, the doctor may be unable to save him from even a comparatively mild illness. On the other hand, if the patient has confidence, faith, and determination, he may recover from a serious sickness. Frequently, faith is the deciding factor.

Medicine and religion have come down hand in hand through the ages. Perhaps at no time in the history of the world has there been such an understanding of the relation between these two great healers as at present. Daily, priests, ministers, and physicians work side by side

in their efforts to alleviate mental and physical suffering. Probably in no medical cases are strength of character, hope, and faith more essential than in patients with nervous disorders. The restoration of self-confidence, poise and tranquillity in such persons may be aided greatly by the good council and advice of the minister or priest. Tired, tense, over-strained nerves may be eased by the restful, peaceful, soothing influence of religion. Thoughts that tend to turn inward are led away from self, out toward others and toward God.

Consequently, it is with great pleasure and with a deep sense of appreciation that I present to my readers the following chapter which has been prepared by my close friend and confidant, the Reverend Edwin O. Kennedy, D.D. In this splendid chapter I am sure everyone will find something of hope and faith to tide him through his troubles.

A Talk With the Minister

"There's nothing wrong with you—just nerves." Your doctor has just looked over the final reports of your physical examination and laboratory tests. "Cut down on coffee; get more sleep; and try to relax." In rare cases he may suggest a psychiatrist. But probably your case is not serious enough to need one. Your nerves are just taut, humming like high-tension wires, sometimes upsetting your digestion or keeping you awake at night. So he says: "Why not talk with your minister? What you need is something to help you relax; to take your mind off yourself; to give you a change of perspective. Religion can help—and it's not as expensive as psychiatry."

So here you are in the minister's study. This may be your first visit, but before many minutes I know quite a

bit about you. I know, for one thing, that you honestly want help. You are not the kind who enjoys ill-health and who uses it as a basis for demanding attention. You do not want sympathy. You want to be well. Your nerves have cut down your efficiency as a worker, have made you hard to live with at home, and have generally taken the shine out of life. So you are honestly seeking relief.

Furthermore, you have been intelligent in your search. You have common sense. I know that because you did not try some patent medicine or quack cure. You went to a reputable doctor, whose training and experience qualify him to deal intelligently with human ills. You have taken the first step towards relieving your ill. You have made sure that your body is in good condition. You realise that sometimes high blood pressure or stomach ulcers can play havoc with nerves, so you have made sure that a physical condition is not the cause. Its "just nerves".

Having resolved to follow your doctor's advice about diet and sleep, you have decided to give your nerves every chance. So you have adopted his last suggestion and have come to see your minister.

Religion May Hinder

I would like to ask you first of all what you think about religion. Because there are some kinds of religion that tend to cause rather than cure nerve troubles. Just as some quack medicines often aggravate an illness, so some kinds of religion only increase the strain upon one's nervous system. Mental hospitals often have cases where

a breakdown was due primarily to some mistaken view of religion or to some sense of guilt resulting from the breaking of a rigid religious code. I would want to know first of all whether your religion is the kind that will help or hinder you in mastering your nerves.

Scores of children grow up with an idea of God that fills them with fear. Dr. Jowett tells us that his first conception of God was gained from a tremendous eye painted on the wall of his Sunday School room with the words beneath it in large letters: "I see you." Such has often been the conception of God put before children, a watchful, all-seeing tyrant waiting to catch them in some misdeed and filling their every moment with dread, lest they slip. Some people never outgrow this thought of God. To them he is still an object of fear, a bogey-man.

Obviously, if that is your thought of God he will be worse than no God at all so far as your nerves are concerned. You might better be a happy, care-free pagan enjoying the beauties of nature and the warmth of the sun without the fear of some over-shadowing and terrible deity. But if you share the Christian thought of God as God of Love (regardless of the church or sect to which you may belong), then you have the best possible ally in religion towards conquering your nerves.

I shall not attempt here to go into theology. We could debate by the hour such subjects as why there is suffering in a world ruled by a God of Love. I think there are some answers that throw light on such questions. But we are not interested in theology. We are interested in religion. And for the most part, religion is a life of trust and a venture of faith, backed by the accumulated testimony of generations of people who have found in that

faith the highest, most intelligent, and most helpful view of the world in which we live.

What Faith Does

Assuming, then, that you believe in a God of whom you are not afraid and to whom you can trust whole-heartedly, I would like to ask you how you think faith operates. Some people who do not ordinarily believe in magic believe in it when they come to religion. They do not expect medicine to accomplish miracles in a moment, but they do expect that of faith. So they go to shrines and religious centres like Saint Anne du Beaupré. I do not want to make light of these places, nor of the tremendous faith in which people go there desperately seeking help. Nor will any intelligent person deny that sometimes people are helped by such visits in what seems like an almost miraculous manner. But if faith is going to help you, it will probably help you as much in London as in Lourdes. And it will probably give you that help, as medicine gives you help; not in a sudden, dramatic cure, but in a slow, steady improvement. Medicine never actually cures us; it creates conditions such that nature can gradually restore our health. Faith cannot cure body or nerves, but it can help to provide conditions in which your bodies and nerves may regain their normal poise and sense of well-being.

Assuming, then, that you have an intelligent view both of God and of the power of faith, just what can you expect of those realities by way of help in handling your case of nerves? Just how shall you go about availing yourself of other resources of the world of the spirit?

Let us imagine that you are a busy man of affairs. You are caught in the turmoil of the modern world of commerce. Telephones are constantly jangling at your elbow until your nerves are jangling, too. One interview follows another in rapid succession, keeping you constantly keyed up.

You must be on the alert, focusing your attention upon details, and bringing all the resources of body, mind and (chiefly) nerves to the task of keeping pace with a world of competition.

Under these conditions your nerves become more and more taut, until they reach what seems like the breaking-point. Sometimes they do break. But most of the time they do not need to. They can be prevented from breaking by giving them a brief chance now and then to relax. Just as a good stretch can put your muscles in a state of relaxation, after they have been under strain, so your mind and nerves need "stretching"—something that will make them reach out and up, and then relax, ready for a fresh load of responsibility.

Lift Your Eyes

I once heard upon the authority of a famous eye specialist that one of the best relaxations for the muscles of the eye when they become tired and taut from steady use is to turn the eye to some far-away subject—a mountain or a distant tower. That is what I mean in regard to nerves. Taut with our application to some immediate task, they need the relief that comes from some distant view.

There are many ways in which they can gain that. On

their office walls many men hang pictures of the places where they spend their vacations—a trout stream or a mountain-trail, lifting their eyes from a desk loaded with business they catch sight of these views that are filled with all kinds of happy associations, and for a moment they are carried out and up in a great “stretch” of imagination. They are once more wading in the stream or feeling under them the lift and fall of the horse as it climbs the trail. The next moment they are back at their desk—but refreshed. Their nerves have had a chance to “let go”.

Religion offers much the same opportunity. Indeed, the Psalmist spoke of “lifting our eyes to the hills,” and then went on to speak of God as the highest hill from which help comes. God is the distant and the far. We live in time. He lives in eternity. We live in space. He inhabits the limitless realms of the universe. Our lives are often weak and unlovely. He is the altogether true and beautiful and good. When we lift our eyes to Him, we are carried for a moment out of ourselves. We lose ourselves in contemplation of His greatness. Our limitations and weaknesses are forgotten. When we return to our tasks, it is with a sense of having seen far horizons and of having had our mind and nerves and will stretched, and then left rested and relaxed.

Lift Your Thoughts

There are all kinds of help that make it easier for us to visualise God that are quite legitimate. Symbols are one kind of help. Just as a wedding-ring reminds one of the sacrament that binds a husband and wife together,

so a symbol like the cross on one's study desk reminds one of the love that "bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things". For multitudes of people through the ages, the cross, set originally upon a hill, has been a symbol of God to which they could lift their eyes and by it be lifted out of themselves into communion with the great, tireless, eternally-loving spirit of God.

Pictures do much the same thing. There is a picture familiar to most people through frequent reproduction of the rose window in the Cathedral of Rheims. Everything in that picture tends to lift one's thoughts up and away from himself towards what is sublime. There is first of all the great upward reach and swing of the columns as they disappear into the dim, mysterious recesses of the vaulted roof. Then there are the shafts of sunlight which have stippled a design in colour on the stone floor, and along which one's eyes climb naturally to the window itself, where the light is sifted through stained glass centuries old. Everything about that picture takes one out of himself, and lifts him towards the spacious, timeless world of God's infinity.

Still other people find this lifting, "stretching" power in books and bits of verse. A friend of mine tells of bending at the bedside of a pneumonia patient at the hospital and repeating slowly the words from the Old Testament: "The Eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting Arms." From the patient, gasping for breath, came the whispered response: "That helps." For a moment she had been lifted out of thought of herself to the thought of the great unwearied strength of God that, like mighty arms, could carry her when her own strength was nearly gone.

The Value of Good Reading

One of the great difficulties in the field of reading is to select from the almost endless range of books the ones that are going to help you. It is not only that the field is so great, it is also the fact that what helps one may not help another. Tastes differ. What is one man's food is another man's poison. Even the Bible must be used with discernment. Taken as a whole, the Book of Psalms, is, perhaps, one of the best for the purpose we have in mind. Certain passages, like the fortieth chapter of Isaiah, also have about them that sublime strength and uplift which carry one out of himself into the presence of what is greater than himself.

Generally speaking, the best reading for people with "nerves", is the kind that tempts one to look out rather than in. Books of travel, adventure, and exploration; well-selected biographies, particularly of men and women who have mastered handicaps; poetry that is appreciative rather than analytical—these are some of the things to choose. Books to avoid are the type that drive one in upon himself, as many modern, so-called psychological novels tend to do. Dickens is better than Dreiser for the nerves.

The Value of Worship

Returning to the more distinctly religious field, I should like to put in a good word for worship, particularly public, corporate worship in church. Many people are so gifted that they can worship privately and lose themselves in the contemplation of God. But most of us are helped to do this by the presence of others around us who have assembled in a place designed for this pur-

pose. Our spiritual faculties are "stepped up" by association with a group and under trained leadership.

The Roman Catholic Church has long been skilled in the art of worship, and the Protestant Church, particularly in recent years, has given much thought and study to the perfecting of this branch of its service. Much progress still remains to be made. Many church buildings are poorly designed and not adapted for lifting one's thoughts to what is sublime and beautiful. Many clergymen are unskilled in the practice of worship. Many congregations have never been instructed in the meaning of the service and so fail to be lifted by it to the heights they might reach through intelligent participation. But in spite of all these things, most churches offer to the person who goes honestly and sincerely desiring to worship God a helpful influence and assistance.

Of one of the greatest and busiest characters who ever lived, whose life was marked by perfect poise and the absence of any suggestion of "nerves", it was said that: "As his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath Day." He made, that is, a habit of worship. He went habitually once a week to the place where with others his thoughts were lifted away from himself towards the Eternal. Then relaxed and refreshed, he returned ready for the tasks that awaited him. With an ever greater need for such occasions in our modern world of speed and strain, the man with "nerves" will see that once a week at least they are brought to church and forgotten as he joins with others in the praise and worship of God.

The Need of Stimulation

But suppose your case of "nerves", is not that of the

business man whose hours are crowded and tense. On the contrary, it is the lonely monotony of your life that has, as we say "got on your nerves". You crave colour, excitement, companionship. Just as some people cannot stand the silence of the deep woods, so you feel you cannot any longer stand the long, quiet, drab monotonous hours of what seem like endless days.

This is the kind of experience that is common to people in rural areas, where hour after hour they must follow the same unbroken round of chores, often without contact with the outside world. Sometimes such situations are complicated by people who, apparently free from nerves themselves, cannot understand why others should be so affected—like the farmer who was asked if he could account in any way for his wife's nervous breakdown and who replied: "No. I can't understand it. She hasn't been off the farm in fifteen years!"

Obviously, in these situations, the need is not so much for relaxation as for stimulation, wider contacts, and more varied interest. The radio, for example, has literally brought salvation to multitudes of people in out-of-the-way places, where otherwise the loneliness and colourless monotony of life would be almost unendurable, and nerves would be stretched to the breaking-point. Not only does the radio break the sense of isolation through the warm, personal medium of the human voice, but it also suggests all kinds of varied interests that keep one in touch with the wider world of human activity—music, sports, fashions, plays and politics. If the radio is often the bane of the city man's nerves, it is also the salvation of his isolated brother in the country.

Similarly the automobile has broken down the sense of isolation for those in remote regions. I called recently

at a home in what, in the old days, would have been an isolated, lonely farming region—only to find that the entire family had left in their car for a vacation hundreds of miles away. This ability not only to bring the world to one's house through the radio, but to push back one's horizons by going out into the world in one's car has done good to numerous people who would otherwise suffer from the monotony and isolation of rural life. The car whose strident horn and screeching brakes whip the nerves of the city-dweller to a frenzy is the same car that brings salvation to the nerves of his country cousin.

With modern advantages like the radio and car there has been a decline in some kinds of religion. The old-fashioned meeting with its intense emotional stimulation flourished in areas where people were bored by the monotony of life. It gave them an outlet and a "kick". Poor souls, they needed it! Like the religion of "better days to come" which helped to make life tolerable for the slaves, so the religion of emotional upheaval lifted the pioneer for a while out of the lonely drabness of his existence. Pioneer days are pretty well past. But in spite of cars and radios and all the other modern advantages there are multitudes of people, who, for the sake of their nerves if nothing else, need the additional lift and stimulation which only religion can give.

Appreciation of Beauty

Some people face a need that is almost exactly the opposite of that of the jaded, harassed business man. When he needs an escape, something that will carry his mind out and away from his surroundings, the person whose life is dull and monotonous needs help to find in

his surroundings more meaning and variety and colour. Religion helps to give this by stirring us with fresh appreciation and realisation of such things as the beauty of nature, the dignity of our work, and the possibility of comradeship in the midst of solitude.

Wordsworth did not say that Peter Bell had a case of nerves. But he may well have done so, for:

“A primrose by the river’s brim
A yellow primrose was to him
And it was nothing more.”

In contrast, think of the stimulation and interest that comes to the person who, with insight sharpened by religion, can see that:

“All shapes and sounds have something which is not
Of them; a spirit broods amid the grass;
Vague outlines of the Everlasting Thought
Lie in the melting shadows as they pass;
The touch of an eternal presence thrills
The fringes of the sunsets and the hills.”

Nerves which have grown taut with the same unchanging surroundings day after day find release and poise and variety in the fresh insights and appreciation of beauty which religion gives.

Even greater perhaps is the need for multitudes of people to have something that will lift their work above the level of deadly routine. The sheer drudgery of many occupations is appalling. One wonders sometimes how human beings with their highly-developed nervous system can endure the tedious, treadmill existence which many people lead. I have in mind one young man who told me of his job. It consisted of taking bits of metal

as they came from the casting surface and placing them one by one against a burnishing wheel. Usually men did this at the rate of several hundred an hour, but he had whipped up his nerves and muscles until he was turning out over a thousand an hour. After an eight-hour day, think of the condition of his nerves!

I believe that something must be done to save such people and thousands like them from becoming mere cogs in our industrial machine. In the meantime it is possible for such people to find relief and a "fresh grip" in the thought that their work is part of the larger work of the world. In a factory which made aeroplane parts I once saw a sign which read: "We helped Lindbergh to fly the Atlantic." In that way the workman was helped to link his dull, monotonous task to an event of romance and adventure.

A Feeling of Comradeship

Religion tends to do something of the same sort to link our little lives and tasks to the great, on-going life and work of the world, and ultimately of God, assuming that we are engaged in useful, honest labour. "You must be able to feel the mountains above you while you work in your little garden," said Phillips Brooks. You must realise, that is, that beyond your little task is the larger world of men and affairs and the processes of the universe which give your task significance. Such a thought can give a new dimension to your work. It can throw a new light upon it, and give it new zest, at the same time that it takes from it the course of futility and monotony that results so often in tense and ragged nerves.

Even when one must live and work alone, when the sense of solitude threatens to "get on one's nerves", there is the release and stimulation which many have found in that sense of invisible comradeship which religion supplies. "God is with us," we say. And like Brother Lawrence, we find that our surroundings have been transformed and for a moment our kitchen has become a temple!

But here again let me hasten to add that nothing can finally and completely take the place of human comradeship in relieving the nerve-strain of monotony. Even religion of the kind I have been describing thrives better in association with other people. Hence the need for a church and for worship.

Oppressed by a feeling that our lives are commonplace; by the dull tedium of our tasks, and by the sense that we are more or less isolated, we go to church. There new light falls upon the old scenes and tasks. Perspectives are changed. We see our lives in the light of eternal purposes and values as they sweep down across the ages. We mingle with others who share our thoughts and experiences and faith. We become conscious of a presence greater than ourselves, through which we find strength and bracing comradeship. The hour ends and we go home. But something has happened. Life is different. Nerves that were crying out against the dull monotony of existence are healed and invigorated and we are ready for another week.

Overcoming Fear

There is the third and final typical case of "nerves" which results from fear, fear of failure, fear of disgrace,

fear that we will lose our job, fear that we will get sick, fear of death and sometimes of punishment after death. So much has been written on this subject that one hesitates to add to it. But it may not be out of place in this chapter to suggest that religion at its best has been one of the greatest allies in conquering fear with its grim harvest of nervous breakdowns.

This does not imply by any means that religion is a panacea. Specific fears must be met with specific remedies. The man whose nerves are at the breaking-point because of the fear that he cannot feed and clothe his children must have more than religion. He must have a job that gives him money and the assurance of steady work. The woman whose nerves are on edge because she suspects herself of having a malignant disease, needs more than prayer. She needs doctors, laboratories, X-rays and all the resources that modern science has made available.

But all of these separate fears can be far better met and mastered when at the bottom of our lives there is a basic faith and trust. This fundamental attitude which enables one to face life with courage and confidence is found chiefly through religion. It is religion. For, as one of our keenest modern writers has recently pointed out: "Religion is primarily a life of trust."

Again I repeat what I said at the beginning. There are some kinds of religion that do not beget faith and confidence, but rather the opposite attitude of fear and distrust. The savage trembles before his idol. He shrinks before his tribal taboos. He cringes before his priest. But as one traces human life across the centuries, and the mind and spirit of man grow in insight and experience, religion becomes for him a tremendous source of reassurance. He feels that the universe is not against him, but

for him, backing him up in every high endeavour and bracing him for the mastery of life. God is not his enemy, but his friend. He can commit his life to Him and know that he is safe. Now he is adequate for anything life may bring.

This capacity of religion to inspire faith and confidence has been expressed over and over. It is interesting to see how often in the pages of both the Old and New Testaments it is definitely associated with the conquest of fear.

“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

Therefore we will not fear.”—Psalms XLVI, 1.

“The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?

The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?—Psalms XXVII, 1.

“God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.”—Timothy, I, 7.

“There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear.”—I John, IV, 18.

“This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.”—I John V, 4.

Let a person lay hold of great words like these that come from men and women who have grappled with hardships and handicaps. Let him say them over and over until their blazing faith has burned its way into his

mind and kindled his own faith. Let him meet with living people who keep that faith alive and aglow in a religious fellowship. Above all, let him carry that faith into life and face his fears with the confidence which such faith suggests and inspires. By following this course, he has taken the first and most important step towards the mastery of fear and the taming of his stubborn, rebellious nerves.

That does not mean that one's nerves will always be finally and completely whipped. In times of stress they may rebel again. But out of his experience one will have learned the best method of pulling them back into line. And out of his ventures in faith he will also know that there are resources in the field of the spirit upon which he can draw. He may even come at last to be able to say, as did a friend of mine whose nerves were shattered by shell-shock in the war, but who had so mastered them that he lived to do a magnificent piece of work in the world: "Nerves are God's hell-hounds—but He holds the other end of the leash!"

CHAPTER XI

CONCLUSIONS

An Old Story

IT must now be evident to the reader that medicine and operations are of no avail in the treatment of functional nervous conditions. Many who have tried them could testify to the truth of this. Your story and complaints probably seem unique to you yet they are probably familiar to your doctor. In the past, perhaps, he was inclined to humour you and give you a red, white, or brown pill, according to his whim; but it was your confidence in him rather than the sugar-coated tablet which did the work. Today, doctors are trying to make patients see that the road to health and happiness is more likely to be found through hygienic living and philosophy than through medicine and surgery.

After all, when one considers what a complicated piece of mechanism the human body is, is it any wonder that with all the abuse it gets there are sometimes aches and pains. It is impossible to go through life without some discomforts, an upset stomach, an occasional headache, palpitation, constipation, haemorrhoids, pains in the arms or legs, insomnia, burning feet, tightness of the neck, colitis, puffs on the shoulder, skin blemishes, bunions, corns, flat feet, fissures, and other ailments. Minor ailments shouldn't be taken too seriously. If your doctor tells you there is nothing to worry about, follow his advice. Save your worry for the more serious ills.

A Yearly Check-Up

If you are at all concerned about your health, visit your physician once or twice a year, as you would your dentist, and request him to check your physical condition. If he finds your blood-pressure below normal, be thankful that it is not too high. Some people continually worry because they have low blood-pressure. That is foolish. If your doctor finds that your heart occasionally skips a beat, do not become alarmed. It may be due to nothing more than the excessive use of coffee, a matter which can be remedied easily. If you are troubled with gas on the stomach, ask for an analysis of your stomach acids; either an excess or a lack of acid may produce this condition. If the acids are normal, the disturbance may be due to a diseased gall-bladder; but if the X-ray (cholecystogram with dye test) of that organ is normal, your trouble is probably of a purely functional nature. Occasionally, it may be due to a muscle spasm, and if so, your physician will prescribe treatment to relieve this. Probably it is nothing more than a nervous condition, which will be improved as you learn to relax properly.

If the doctor's examination reveals that the tight, choking feeling in your neck is not due to a goitre, but only to your tense nervous condition, be glad, and learn how to relax and overcome it. Stop doing the things which make you nervy, and get outside and enjoy nature more.

If he finds that those dizzy spells are not caused by high blood-pressure, as you feared, be happy. He may suggest that you have your eyes refracted for glasses, or, if you are a woman near the menopause age, he may be able to relieve your condition with ovarian therapy.

If you are constipated and have been taking strong laxatives for years, do not expect him to remedy this condition overnight. He will prescribe the proper diet and directions, and if you continue to follow his advice, you will overcome this annoyance in time.

If you are under forty and occasionally feel little shooting pains in the region of your heart, the chances are that the trouble is not organic, but is due either to heartburn, a mild indigestion, or perhaps, neuritis. Older people should be checked carefully by their physician. If the pains are severe and at times agonising, radiating down the left arm, they may be due to angina pectoris, a spasm of the arteries to the heart. However, probably eight out of every ten complaints of pain around the heart are of a functional nature and of no serious consequence. If there is any doubt, consult a good doctor and request that an electro-cardiogram be made. If he assures you that there is nothing wrong with your heart, stop worrying, and diagnose your trouble as a case of nerves. If your feet swell and puff up, especially in hot weather, it may be well to consult your physician; if he is satisfied that your heart and kidneys are normal, why worry?

Help your Doctor To Help You

If your complaints are so numerous that you must make a list of them, they are probably purely functional. If your doctor assures you of this, try to work with him rather than against him. After all, you must know there is no medicine or combination of medicines which can alleviate so many complaints. Get your mind off yourself. Medicines and operations will avail little if your trouble is functional.

Perhaps your hands shake and your fingers tremble when you try to hold them steady. Of course, if you are losing weight and your heart-beat is rapid, these symptoms may be due to a disease, but if your doctor tells you there is nothing organically wrong with you, check over your list of vices. Do you use nicotine, caffeine, and alcohol? Do you use them to excess? If not, it may be purely functional tremor, which can be stopped if you relax.

Sometimes when everything has gone wrong and you want sympathy from your family, you may decide to scare them into worrying about you. Consequently, you wring your hands and toss about in bed and become hysterical, until you actually produce a chemical disturbance of the parathyroid glands. Do not allow yourself to get into such a state, because any competent physician can recognise pseudo-tetany based upon a purely functional condition, that is, a pure neurosis and he will offer you no sympathy.

Talk It Over

It may be that you are nervy for a good reason. You may have a large family with earnings inadequate to take care of their needs. Your husband may be a drunkard, or your wife a nagger. Possibly your children are ill or crippled. There are any number of causes of nerviness, such as inability to meet the mortgage payments, crop failure, dependent parents, or diseased cattle. You may be exhausted taking care of a baby, or you may be approaching the age of menopause. Death may have striken a loved one, you are working too hard, or you cannot find employment. Your children are not clothed

and fed properly. Perhaps your mother was highly strung and you were brought up in a nervy atmosphere. Your business liabilities exceed your assets. These and hundreds of other reasons cause people to worry and tend to make them nervy. Face these adversities bravely and try not to worry, for many will straighten out in the course of time. Time is a great healer and you will discover its compensation. Remember, also, that you are not the only one afflicted with troubles, for rich or poor, young or old, all have them. All need an abundance of courage. If you are unable to solve your problems, perhaps your doctor, minister, priest, lawyer, banker or best friend will come to your rescue. It always helps to talk over your troubles with someone.

Keep Your Chin Up

If death has brought sadness to your home, make a brave effort not to let it weigh you down too long and too deeply. Rather than become a nervous wreck through grief and insomnia, devote your time and energy to your loved ones or to some worthwhile outside interest. Live outside yourself. There are many people in your town or neighbourhood who need your help. Start looking for them now.

If you have been working too hard and are your own boss, take a vacation; if you work for someone else, tell your employer you need a vacation, and if you have been efficient, he will help you. If your nerviness is of an hereditary or environmental nature, be philosophical about it and try to overcome it. In case you are financially embarrassed and need medical attention, but feel you cannot afford it, consult your physician. Most

doctors are only too glad to offer their services, trusting that when conditions improve, their patients will not forget.

Avoid Quacks—Cults—Needless Surgery

You may be the type of person who goes to the surgeon desiring an operation, as it seems to you the only way out of your difficulty. He makes a thorough examination, decides the trouble is functional, and informs you that an operation will do no good and may even aggravate your condition. Of course, he might be mistaken, as he cannot always be correct; but the chances are he is right. Don't be disappointed or upset, as some people are when they know an operation is not required. Some patients actually become angry when an operation is refused. These people assume the attitude that the doctor doubts their word and believes their symptoms are purely imaginary. Curiously, it is frequently just as difficult to persuade such a person that he does not need surgery as it is to convince some cancer patients that an operation is urgent. Unless you heed the advice of your physician, you will probably sooner or later fall into the hands of some unscrupulous doctor who, doubtless, will operate; but before long the effects of this surgery will have worn off, provided your trouble is due to nerves only and you will be worse off than before. Unless you adopt a heal-yourself philosophy, you will ultimately drift into the hands of patent medicine concerns or healing cults. In a few years you will have spent hundreds of pounds, and after discovering the truth, will in the end return to your honest physician. For those who have already been through a similar ordeal, of quacks, cults, and needless

surgery, this book can now be of little avail; but for all who may be on the threshold of such unfortunate experience, it is hoped that these chapters will cause them to stop and consider. If your trouble is definitely not of a functional nature and your doctor feels that surgery is necessary, follow his advice. If there is any doubt in your mind regarding your condition, you have the right to ask for further consultation and advice.

If your doctor is a busy man, as most are, give him a break. When he tells you there is nothing to worry about, just "Pack up your troubles in your old kit-bag and smile, smile, smile, what's the use of worrying: it never was worth while". If he appears hurried, remember that he has babies to deliver, scarlet fever cases to attend, and broken arms to mend; don't be upset if he seems to spend too little time listening to your complaints. You may be sure that if you were suffering from gall-stones, colic, or typhoid, he would be giving you all the time you needed.

Sadler has pointed out the need of intelligent ministrations to this class of nervy patients by the general practising physician. After all, the latter's experience, modern psychology, common sense, and ability to understand and judge human nature are the essential components of psychiatry. With such attributes the majority of physicians will be far more effective counsellors and advisors for the average nervous patients than the irregular practitioner or psychic cultist. Most neurotic sufferers are very intelligent patients, and if wisely dealt with, will be appreciative of the help given them. Sadler believes that the physician of the future is destined to become largely a psychic minister, dispensing courage, confidence and stoicism to his patients, all of whom are

more or less disordered in nerves and discouraged in mind. These people must be taught how to think logically and to reason calmly. This takes a considerable amount of a doctors time. Do not therefore, expect your doctor to give several hours of his time to your case unless you are prepared to make an honest effort to accept and follow his advice.

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